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The Contemporary Soul, by Irwin Edman, on page 814

The Saturday Review of Literature

EDITED BY HENRY SEIDEL CANBY

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The Book Depression

THE depression in the book business began about six months or more after the turn of the cycle of general business and has reached a low point this Spring. Just why book sales kept up after sales of other commodities went down, and just when in relation to less specialized articles of trade, books are likely to be freely bought again, are interesting questions.

It is not improbable that the resistance of the book market to the powerful influences of financial depression was due to a continued excitement. Books sell in times of excitement when minds are keen and awake, the interest aroused, and change in the air. The pleasurable stir of boom times sells books. The deeper excitement of crisis, such as the years 1914 to 1917 in this country, sells books; and also, though in a different way, the excitement of distress, fear, unrest, and suspense. Stirred in one way the minds of potential readers rise to new ideas, or warm in the presence of imagination. Men and women are curious then, as are all humans when they are thoroughly alive and awake, and curiosity is the beginning of much good reading. But if the excitement is of a different order, if it results from worry and strain, or from waiting upon the possibility of escape from disaster, then readers seek relief in books, they want an anodyne, or a transformer to alter the current of their thoughts.

* * *

Of course a book is a commodity sold at a price, and must be so regarded, and naturally the laws of expenditure and economy apply to its sales as they do to automobiles or soap. But not in the same measure. We are buying fewer books for the same reason that we are buying fewer suits of clothes, but that is not the only, and probably not the chief reason. In all probability such moderate price changes as the observant may already notice will help to bring about recovery. Yet last Spring's flurry over book prices was futile if not positively damaging, because it got itself misstated and was widely misunderstood. The public, naturally, wanted cheaper books, and somehow got the idea from the abundant publicity which accompanied the dollar-book movement, that all books were much too dear, and that many, if not most, could be sold for a dollar as successfully as for $2.50. Many statisticians told them that they were wrong, but too late, the harm was done. It is not too late, however, for the trade to follow the practice of other businesses, which, with declining costs of commodities, are making new price levels, offering a real reduction which is felt as such, but still keeping prices high enough for a right return. Should not, for example, the standard price for a standard novel be again fixed at $2.00, the figure we were all accustomed to only a short time before the peak of prosperity?

Yet price, we believe, is not the chief factor in the sale of books. An aroused interest is at least as important, and probably more so. Just as the book market held up, illogically, after the summer of '29, when other trades began slipping downward, so it may recover, and even reach normal strength, before the curve of business at large moves sharply upward. It needs action, intensity, expectancy. It pines in apathy, dulness, and in periods of marking time. For this reason it may respond to a change in conditions purely internal to itself, since a few outstanding books in a season, read with excitement and talked over avidly, will stir up a demand for all good books. It will respond to external conditions when the reaction from the nervous tension of that lurid year or two of unnatural prosperity is over and with fresh spirits we begin to interest ourselves again in news of the intellect and the imagination. The mental collapse of 1930-1931 is not unlike that let down which men, women, and even children felt in 1919-1920. But the Fall of 1920 and the Spring of 1921 were wonderful months for books. May history repeat itself!

Spring Thought

By DAVID MORTON

NOW . . . the slow curve of thought
Turns upward with the bough,
It straightens and is wrought
Of blossoms . . . now,

Shines . . . and is strange and still,
It strains against the sky,
Sweet and confused of will:
To stay . . . to fly . . .

Loving the earth, and fond
As root-things are,
Yet all but off, beyond
The last white star;

Not knowing what it seeks . . .
And words, when they come,
Are blossoms, and it speaks
Like apple or plum.

This Week

"The Enduring Quest."
Reviewed by JOSEPH JASTROW.

"Green River."
Reviewed by LOUIS UNTERMEYER.

"The Pure in Heart."
Reviewed by CARL F. SCHREIBER.

"America's Way Out."
Reviewed by J. B. S. HARDMAN.

"The Tragedy of Ah Qui."
Reviewed by ALICE TISDALE HOBART.

"The Road Back."
Reviewed by CHRISTOPHER MORLEY.

"A Pagan's Pilgrimage."
Reviewed by HENRY TRACY.

Round About Parnassus.
By WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT.

"France Under the Bourbon Restoration."
Reviewed by ARNOLD WHITRIDGE.

"Life Among the Lowbrows."
Reviewed by BEULAH AMIDON.

"The Little Entente."
Reviewed by L. R. E. PAULIN.

Next Week, or Later

Interregnum.
By ELMER DAVIS.

Lincoln Steffens

By ALBERT J. NOCK

AT the time I am writing this, there is a tremendous uproar going on over municipal corruption. Chicago has just held an election; she has Turned the Rascals Out, and gone in for Good Government and an Honest Business Administration—so I read in the papers (except that the papers do not capitalize these hoary and venerable clichés, as in any kind of fair play with their readers it seems they should). New York has not gone so far yet, but she is on her way. She has started in on the old orthodox program of reform, the churches and civic organizations are on the warpath, journalistic enterprise is making two sensations grow where one grew before, and the Republican machine is taking the high moral ground that an opposition machine always takes when there is a chance to get votes by it, and is processing the raw material of Tammany's alleged malfeasances into political capital for next year's market. Perhaps other communities are busy at the same enterprise; I do not know, for all this is such old stuff that I have not taken pains to follow it closely. But probably they are.

New York's crusaders show that they have not picked up a new idea about this sort of thing in twenty years. Doubtless Chicago's Godfreys and Peter the Hermits have likewise learned nothing. I speak of New York, however, because I have spent some time there lately and looked the situation over at close range. New York's moral leaders are out gunning for persons, for recreant jobholders, just as their predecessors were twenty years ago, in the palmy days of Dr. Parkhurst, William Travers Jerome, and the Lexow committee. Their fundamental idea is the same as then, i. e., that the way to purify society and sweeten up politics is by putting somebody in jail. If only you can get enough people in jail, everything will be all right. Change the names of the actors in the present drama or raree-show back to Parkhurst, Becker, Waldo, Rosenthal, Mrs. Goode, Jerome, Sipp, etc., and no one could tell whether the curtain had gone up on a modern play or one that went to the warehouse after a brisk run in the consulship of William Jay Gaynor.

* * *

In other words, the righteous people of New York are exhibiting themselves in just as tight a grip of the Absolutes as they ever were; and any one who knows anything about history knows that this, and nothing but this, is the trouble with New York. What really ails New York is not that the mayor is a fool, the magistrates crooks, the police grafters—put it any way you like. Not at all. What ails New York is that so many citizens believe that some people are Bad and some people are Good, and that the way to deal with municipal corruption is to hurl the Bad people out and put them in jail where they can not do any more Bad things, and set up the Good people in control, and give them a chance to do good things. This belief in the Absolutes is the ruin of New York, as it will be the ruin of any society, small or large, that entertains it and tries to practice it.

By an odd coincidence, or perhaps by one of the turns of ironical humor that the order of nature sometimes shows, there has come out at just this moment a remarkable book* which might very well bear as a subtitle, "A Lifelong Quest of the Absolutes." Its actual title is "The Autobiography of

* THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF LINCOLN STEFFENS. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co. 1931. Two volumes. $7.50.

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Lincoln Steffens." Summarizing its contents in a word or two, it is the story of a boy who got interested in the nature of the Good and of the Bad, started out to investigate and kept up his research through long and interesting experiences with all sorts and conditions of men in all walks of life, from publicans and panders down to presidents, and from princes and professors up to policemen. He prosecuted this quest wherever chance led him. Beginning as an inquisitive boy in California, he found that everybody in the family entourage thought he, or she, knew exactly who the Bad people and the Good people were, what things and actions were Good and what were Bad, and was quite ready to inform him all about these matters, but that where he pried into their knowledge, it turned out that nobody really knew anything. So he made up his mind, when school days were over, to extend his investigations and apply them over a larger field.

College and the university were where people went to learn what they wanted to know, so Steffens took for granted that if one wanted to find out what is Good and what is Bad, one should go there to learn; so he went. No success. There again all hands seemed to know just what these were, but Steffens had been acquiring the Socratic method, and when he put them on the carpet, nobody could tell him. From an American university he went to a German university, then to other German universities, winding up at the University of Paris; he became a wandering student, like the mediæval *Vagantes*, roaming around from institution to institution to see what each one had to give him and whether it was anything he could use in his line of philosophical adventure. After some years of this, he returned to America and found himself unexpectedly stranded in New York with a young wife on his hands and one hundred dollars between himself and an entirely incurious, unphilosophical, and hard-boiled world.

He took to journalism and kept at it all his days; using it for a little while as a bread-winner; but soon being relieved from such requirements, he used it thenceforth for leverage on his peculiar ethical problems. It served him well, getting him on the inside of all the most intricate and interesting situations in our public life of the last twenty-five years, municipal, State, national, and international. It got him (or rather, his competent and dextrous use of it got him) into intimate relations with the principal figures in finance, industry, and politics in many countries. Whatever his professional errand, he never forgot his quest. He never lost sight of himself as primarily an investigator into fundamental moralities, into the workings of cause and effect in the realm of morals; and this book is the result.

Steffens not only developed the Socratic method, but added to it the Socratic temper and the Socratic humor. His book, like the "Apology," is the work of a great humorist. It will not be generally taken as such, because only people of great humor can detect humor of this type, and they are few. Most of us are more literal-minded, like the Athenian judges before whom Socrates made his plea, and with whom he played horse in sentence after sentence of most exquisite raillery. What must they have thought, for instance, when they invited Socrates to propose an appropriate penalty for himself, and he said he thought it would probably be about the fair thing all round if the Athenians would maintain him for the rest of his life in the Prytaneum at public expense; but if they wanted him to suggest a fine, he supposed he and his friends might manage to scratch up six or seven dollars among themselves—he couldn't just say, but maybe something like that. The legalist mind does not change much with the ages, and probably the Athenian dicasts looked at one another with the vacant expression of the California prosecutor who had Steffens on the witness stand in the Macnamara dynamiting case. Again, nothing in the modern world could be more purely Socratic in its humor than Steffens's proposal to President Eliot, to come to Harvard University and give lectures to seniors on the various forms under which bribery and corruption first present themselves to young men in all walks of life. Mr. Eliot was interested. He let Steffens give him some specimens of the kind of thing he thought of lecturing about, and became more interested. Then the end came:

> "You would teach those things to stop the doing of them?" he asked.
>
> "Oh, no. I don't mean to keep the boys from succeeding in their professions. All I want to do is to make it impossible for them to be crooks and not know it. Intelligence is what I am aiming at, not honesty. We have, as Americans, quite enough honesty now. What we need is integrity, intellectual honesty."

It is no trouble to imagine the effect of this on the unhumorous Mr. Eliot; yet one says to one's self, what a priceless chance for a head of a university who really knew his business! We can all see now what a priceless chance there was for Athens in Socrates's proposal that they should pay his board for life, simply for the value of having him around. Perhaps in a couple of thousand years some Harvardian, rooting into the university's antiquities, may come on this incident and arrive at a like judgment.

For there is no doubt about it, it is high time that by one means or another a penetrating thoroughgoing intellectual integrity should be developed in this land of ours. There is no quality so meanly and poorly represented in our collective intelligence, and at this particular juncture of affairs, no quality is so nearly indispensable. Those who doubt it should read Steffens's account of the Peace Conference, and his estimate of the value of the League of Nations. His appraisal of Mr. Wilson may be accepted as final, startling as it is. No one will ever add anything significant to it, or turn up anything that will modify it in any important respect. As for the worth of all our disarmament conferences, peace pacts, and the like, here, on page 783, is the final judgment which a strict intellectual integrity pronounces on them; and like a judicial death-sentence, it disposes of a great deal with very few words:

> Wilson did not mean peace, not literally; nor do we Americans, nor do the British, mean peace. We do not want war; nobody in the world wants war; but some of us do want the things we can't have without war.

That is the whole story. The sum of all these proposals for permanent peace is a proposal to get something for nothing, which was never yet successfully done. We are all for peace, like Mr. Wilson, if we may have it without giving up imperialism, the economic exploitation of one country by another. We are all for good government at home, all for clean politics, clean business, if we may keep our privileges, if we may remain beneficiaries of tariffs, land-monopoly, concessions, franchises. Well, on those terms we can have neither peace abroad nor decency at home; the thing is simply impossible. Steffens patiently followed this thread all the way it led through industry, through Wall Street, through municipal, State, national, and international politics, through organized Christianity, organized education, and the findings that he has charted in this book all come to the same thing.

It is utterly useless to arraign persons or even to think about them, to imagine that it makes a pin's difference in ethical result whether the administration of business or politics is carried on by Good people (whoever they are) or by Bad people (whoever they are) as long as it must be carried on under the conditions that our economic system prescribes. Witness Steffens's account of Strong's administration in New York, of Roosevelt, of Wilson, of Mellon, and Gary in business, of any of the large and varied assortment of Good men who appear in his pages. As long as our economic system hangs up certain premiums—prizes—in the form of privileges, so long must the administration of government, international relations, finance, and industry remain just what it is, no matter who runs it.

Steffens's little parable of the origin of evil puts this truth in a striking way. At some meeting of the civic-minded in California, a bishop asked Steffens how our system came to be so bad, who started it, who was responsible. Like most of us, he was greatly interested in the Who, and hardly at all in the What. Steffens replied that this question was very troublesome to theologians. Some of them thought Adam was to blame, while some blamed Eve, and others blamed the serpent. For his part, he thought the apple was responsible, for obviously if the apple had not been there, nothing would have happened. Under like circumstances now, he said, after a lifetime of diligent search and study, he found he could not very much blame mayors, bosses, big business men, labor leaders, presidents, diplomats, and such like. "I blame the apple," he said. "Take the apple away, and you are starting at the right end of the problem. Just putting a few people in jail or throwing them out of office amounts to nothing, as long as you leave the apple hanging there. I suggest you begin by taking away the apple."

But I do not wish to leave the residual impression that Steffens's book is only for the reflective minority. It is far from that. A person who cares nothing whatever for ethics or politics, but who likes first-rate story-telling, fine, objective, humorous, personal narrative, should be the first man in the market for this book. Also, any one who has a boy is missing the chance of a lifetime if he does not read the first fifteen or sixteen chapters aloud to the youngster—a superb piece of work. I hope some day Steffens will lift about thirty thousand words out of those chapters and republish it as a boy's book. Another thing that recommends the work highly to almost any sort of reader (I should suppose so, at least) is that there is no introspection in it. Like a good reporter, Steffens has his eye always on the object. He is thinking steadily about what he sees, not about what is going on in his own head; and his descriptive writing is plain, sincere, unaffected. As the literary art goes nowadays, I do not think the reader needs to be told how great and unusual these merits are, or how gratifying he will find them.

But above and beyond these merits, above and beyond the value of the ethical studies to which I have given so much space—perhaps too much—what emerges from these pages and stands out in clearest outline, is the figure of Steffens himself as I have known him now for many years. He is the man most like Socrates that I have found anywhere in our civilization; a man of immense humor, enormous experience and knowledge, balanced, disciplined into instant readiness of memory, thought, speech, and action; one who, as Phaedo said to Echecrates, "is the most wise, the most just, and the most excellent, of all mankind that we have ever known."

Philosophy en Passant

THE ENDURING QUEST. By H. A. Overstreet. New York: W. W. Norton. 1931. $3.

Reviewed by Joseph Jastrow

WHEN philosophy entered in the best-seller competition, the man who reads as he runs was tempted to think as he reads. Yet the author of "King Mob" enrolls the success of the "Story of Philosophy" among the evidences of the rampant conflict between understanding and the pretence thereof—just another paste-jewel in the crown of King Mob. I cannot wholly agree, though I ventured to call the readers of Mr. Durant's book philosophers by purchase. But I can agree that a popularization of the enduring quest raises a puzzling query as to the legitimate liaison-technique between the philosopher and his clientèle. Socrates and the leisurely agora are gone; can the conversational style and easy page Socratize the modern mind?

Professor Overstreet offers his services as guide, philosopher, and friend; his guidance is welcome, his friendliness unmistakable, his philosophy questionable. The modern temper—without going so far as Mr. Krutch's despondent version—is definitely set in a minor key, with a refrain of critical despair. In its wake a reckless iconoclasm, a veritable whoopee of crashing images, undertones the blare of jazz. The present overtone brings assurance that the storm is spent, and a double rainbow spans a green and refreshed earth. The materialism of the nineteenth century has been replaced by a deeper and higher physics of emergent atoms, aspiring protons and electrons, liberating quantums; and the world of mind in what is called advolution sets the goal of living on a higher plane. Life is neither chemical nor brutal, but human; with illusions outgrown, we are masters of our fate in a modernistic sense.

That the lay mind to which dominantly this message is addressed, is at all affected by the physicists' version of their code of concepts, is more than doubtful; likewise that the level of concern on which that mind feels the pressure of its problems at all approaches the serious scrutiny of the philosopher's enduring quest. If it did, it would not be content with citations from Plato and Shelley and modern consolatory poets. The reënthronement of love as a potent philosophical balm is unconvincing. Far better to acknowledge the thrall of romance with no tincture of philosophy.

Yet this critique does not dismiss the volume with the modern equivalent of damnation by dubious praise: "an experiment noble in motive"; it suggests an uncertainty of another order. Those soothed or convinced by the appeal of this form of presentation would hardly be troubled by "a search for a philosophy of life." They are philosophers *en passant*, in a passing mood; that one professionally concerned with the nature of things is of the same mind as themselves will give them comfort. Accepting the solace, they are likely to believe that they believe for very different reasons than actually move them. The lucid and able argument may prove too persuasive. The enduring quest endures.

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Rafinesque Revived

GREEN RIVER—A Poem for Rafinesque. By JAMES WHALER. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Company. 1931. $2.

Reviewed by LOUIS UNTERMEYER

WHEN "Hale's Pond" appeared in 1927 it received less notice than the most innocuous, paid-for-by-the-author book of verses in which its (now defunct) publisher specialized. There were a few stereotyped paragraphs and practically no consideration of the six rich narratives which were unlike any others produced by their locale. Private rumors began to circulate concerning the quality of the unknown James Whaler; a letter or two to neglectful editors was published (one of them in the columns of this *Review*); here and there the grapevine telegraph carried news of the strange vigor of "Jordan," the knotted intensity of "Runaway," the brilliance of "Monsieur Piperau," in which the author calmly took the Pied Piper out of Hamelin, set him in a Maine lumber-camp, and, instead of making himself ridiculous, created a poem opulent and energetic enough to stand comparison with Browning's.

"Proserpine in Green River" is both a departure from, and a continuation of, the manner of "Hale's Pond." It is a narrative, but a much more difficult feat in story-telling than any of its predecessors. It is redolent of its backgrounds—its author having a flair for exactitudes in scent and color—but instead of being limited to Maine, the tale ranges from Sicily to Kentucky. The story itself concerns an actual figure, one Constantin Rafinesque, born in Galata, a suburb of Constantinople, buried in Philadelphia.

It is surprising that, in these biographical days, no one has taken advantage of Rafinesque's "Life of Travels and Researches," for here is a career crowded with color, instinct with drama. Rafinesque's peregrinations are like Crusoe's turned backwards. The son of a Levant merchant from Marseilles, he traveled from Leghorn to the United States in 1802, at which time he was seventeen and already a precocious naturalist, returned to Italy with a stock of American specimens, and spent ten years in Sicily in research. He married a native beauty and, although it is doubtful whether the romance was as highly-pitched as Mr. Whaler's rendering of it, infidelity was suspected, and in 1815 Rafinesque (who had already published "The Analysis of Nature" in French) sailed for New York. Fortune, which had been with him since childhood, suddenly turned on him. He was shipwrecked within a few hundred yards of land on the coast of Long Island. He lost everything—his monetary savings, his collections, fifty boxes of scientific equipment, manuscripts, drawings, even his clothes. Somehow he reached New York and, determined "to cross the Alleghenies on foot as every botanist should," investigated the country, floated down the Ohio "in an ark" and finally became a professor at Transylvania College in Lexington, Kentucky. But security of any sort was to be denied him. News had reached him that his wife, learning of his losses, was living openly with her lover and had spent the remainder of his capital. His benefactor and dearest friend, John Clifford, died, leaving him psychically isolated. No wonder he began to fear human contacts and devote himself to that part of creation which could hurt him less. He developed eccentricities, eccentricities which to happy natures like Audubon were comical when they were not grotesque. He gave way to a passion—a poet's passion—for discovery, new genera, unheard of species. His preoccupation developed into monomania and, at the end, into megalomania. He died in 1842 in a garret in a Philadelphia slum and was buried in potter's field—and promptly forgotten. Half a century later David Starr Jordan wrote of Rafinesque: Rafinesque loved no man or woman, and died as he had lived, alone."

Mr. Whaler's explicit intention is a refutation of this last sentence; he denies that "Rafinesque loved no man or woman." I doubt if any contemporary author is as well equipped for the task as Mr. Whaler. Being a naturalist, he can appreciate—and approximate—the milieu as well as Rafinesque's material; being a poet he can trace the half-mad vision of strange species and new beings and communicate it with astonishing vigor. Mr. Whaler's manner is, as might have been expected from "Hale's Pond," free but straightforward, swift in tempo, sharp in accent. He is not lost in the technicalities of his subject nor in the technique of his medium. His verse is accurate but always alert; his rhymes have that combination of certainty and surprise which can only be accomplished by the born rhymer. Quotation from a narrative poem is always hazardous, but I risk a few couplets torn from a description of Rafinesque's exploration of the Mammoth Cave and its monstrous stalactites:

> The sinewy adder of my pride uncoiled;
> Though yet adoring, I submitted foiled;
> I moved whither a crystal brotherhood
> Was staring: up red steps like cedar-wood
> Under a storm impending, never falling,
> Of vines inverted, foliage appalling,—
> Needled with dews of fire which never fell
> To bogs of porphyry fennel and morel.
> O choirless cycads! Palm-trees of pitchblende!
> Seeds of a peace the end of the world shall end!
> Dupes of the blue of Lethe! Coral-disks
> That sheathe the moon-wine breasts of odalisques!
> Enameled arches that reflect and span
> Flotillas from the bays of Yucatan,
> Be calmed so utterly their dreams drop sail;
> Here lurchers fall asleep upon the trail.

LINCOLN STEFFENS

There will be some who find Mr. Whaler's treatment over-active to the point of being melodramatic; some who will object to the intensity or, rather, the intensification of his idiom. But his defense, if a defense is needed, might be that no "plot" could be wilder than Rafinesque's own and that the luxuriant images, the rapidly flowering figures of speech, reflect the very prodigality of native flora and fauna.

But more important than Mr. Whaler's rich idiom and his rushing narrative which, somehow, seems to take in infinite detail, is the sense of strangeness he communicates. This strangeness is achieved partly by epithets which are startling yet never unnatural, partly by a nervous—and natural—rhythm. It is a kind of high talking that one hears in these pages, high in quality as well as in pitch. It is the talk of a man, I should say, who is anything but talkative; one who has been not so much persuaded as jarred into speech, jarred beyond the patterns of realism. Here he returns to tell us what reality is like.

At the Malvern Festival in England, from August 3rd to 22nd this year, will be given an historical series of English plays: "Hick's Corner," a morality play, "Ralph Roister Doister," "A Woman Killed with Kindness," "She Would If She Could," "A Trip to Scarborough," "Money," and the modern "The Switchback," representing five centuries of English drama. In the first week of the festival, W. J. Lawrence, F. E. Boas, Bonamy Dobree, and Allardyce Nicoll will lecture on the history of the English stage.

On the 11th of June at Olney, there will be a celebration of the Bi-Centenary of William Cowper.

Hugh Walpole has discovered a first novel by one J. M. Denwood which Messrs. Hutchinson are publishing in England. Mr. Denwood's own description of himself is a "Cumberland working chap."

The Pure in Heart

"My mind's not unhinged. It's yours. The mind of the whole world." Engländer.

THE PURE IN HEART. By FRANZ WERFEL. New York: Simon & Schuster. 1931. $3.

Reviewed by CARL F. SCHREIBER
Yale University

THIS "Bildungsroman" is the gripping story of many unhinged minds, and of three whom destiny selected out of a world gone mad. *They* are the pure in heart—Fritz Leimgruber, the waiter in the Pillar Hall, Barbara, the Bohemian servant-maid and nurse, and Ferdinand R., the son of an Austrian colonel of the old school. Werfel throughout points the finger of shame at the intellectuals, "die Schöngeister," the industrials, the power-groups both military and civilian. His story is an enduring glorification of the simple phrase: "Ich dien." The descriptions are vivid, often fearlessly realistic, but in every instance the fine sensibilities of a master artist have so blurred the edges of a crass naturalism, that even the sensitive minded would on no occasion feel the necessity of having recourse to the striking Nietzschean thumb-nail critizism: "Zola, oder die Kunst zu stinken."

What a plethora of madness, malice, inconsistency, and perversion on the one hand, what loyalty, fidelity, highmindedness, and self-sacrifice on the other, are mirrored against the background of an Austria at peace, at war, an Austria dismembered, an Austria in the throes of revolution! Ferdinand, become a ship's doctor on a Mediterranean steamer, in the quiet of the night looks back upon his own life as at a peep-show. He has never really had a part in his own life. He is the hero of his own existence in spite of himself. What has kept him pure in heart in spite of his many vivid and violent contacts remains and shall remain one of the imponderables of the human soul.

* * *

Let his confrères of the Austrian mad-house pass in kaleidoscopic review. Here is Steidler, the high army officer in the worst connotation of that word, who out of sheer malice forces Ferdinand into command of the firing squad, detailed to shoot in cold blood three Bohemian lads who were supposedly disloyal. Ferdinand wrestles with the brute to make him retract, or to detail another. In vain. Military duty is a concept which to Ferdinand contains no ambiguity. He goes through all the formalities of the execution. At the last moment he rescues his conscience. The word "Fire!" will not cross his lips. Instead he commands "Shoulder arms!" There is Wawra, the Bohemian musician, who, with more of brandy and politics in his brain than is commensurate with dignity, dances about his studio with a black chandelier perched on his bald head, both loudly proclaiming the advent of the Bohemian Republic. There is Elken, in dirty black sweater and leering countenance, the walking delegate of the Russian Revolution, who counsels bloodshed at every opportunity. And the habitués of Pillar Hall: Basil, the pamphleteer, who has fought under every standard of the "isms"; Gebhard, the over-sexed prophet and cocaine-fiend, lovable, bleery-eyed seer, whose last egotistical bequest made Ferdinand the possessor of his death mask; Ronald Weiss, the up-to-the-minute journalist, with his keen sense for news, and his utter lack of principles and standards. But Ferdinand loves to linger over the consistent poet, Gottlieb Krasny. He has never for an instant swerved from the principle that the world owed him a living, not for the poetry he wrote, not at all, but for the verse, profound verse, which rippled from his tongue. In good times, and in bad the same obstinate consistency. At his grave Basil spoke:

> Every phrase-maker today chatters of the martyrdom of the workers. I have no wish to deny that these martyrs exist and suffer. . . . But for a million martyrs to industry there has lived one to leisure. And you were that one, Krasny!

Werfel has made full-length portraits of all these persons, and more. Barbara eludes description. She is as real as the others, and yet she moves gradually over into the realm of the symbolic. She is the personification of fidelity, of mother love. Werfel rises supreme as an artist in his gradual convincing transmutation of the peasant-nurse into the mother. Blood relationship fades into the void before the compelling, genuine spiritual relationship. The day after Ferdinand had received his medical degree from the uni-

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versity, he set out for Barbara's village. Was she still living? was a question which pounded in his brain. He found her old, bent, cheerful, happy that "her young gentleman" had come to pay her a last visit. At a moment when they were alone together in the old house she hurried him up to her room. Out of her old chest she brought out a money-bag and pressed it into Ferdinand's hands.

It will be for you, my dear. I started to save it up the very day the master died. . . . I've only been saving it for you! I just put it away in there bit by bit. I never did trust those savings banks. . . . And I didn't believe in their paper money either. . . . Well, who's the fool now, eh? . . . There's others have lost every bit, but I kept mine. . . . Now you aren't to trouble about me. . . . I have all I need—till my last day and the funeral after it. . . . It's yours! You're the one I love best in the world.

The ship's doctor got up from his afternoon nap uneasy in mind. He had a premonition that Barbara had died on that day. He straightway unpacked her legacy from his trunk.

Bent far out over the hand-rail he unties the knot, turns out the bag, and shakes it. A light gleam of shooting stars shimmers without noise into the sea; the canvas bag flutters after it.

The honey of the sacred laboring bees is eternally shielded and withdrawn from desecration.

Choose Your Way

AMERICA'S WAY OUT. A Program for Democracy. By NORMAN THOMAS. New York: The Macmillan Company. 1931. $2.50.

Reviewed by J. B. S. HARDMAN

MR. THOMAS has drawn up an indictment of the dominant capitalist order which the professional apostles of rugged individualism and perpetual prosperity via unlimited profits will find difficult to refute:

The whole system is planless and chaotic [Mr. Thomas charges]. It gives us a new type of misery, poverty, and unemployment in the midst of potential plenty. . . . The whole ethic of every man for himself and the devil take the hindmost, which has characterized capitalism, is the ethic of war. The marriage of capitalism with nationalism has produced the modern type of imperialism which is our chief root of war.

Over eight million men and women in search of that increasingly elusive job are incontrovertible proof of the charge of wastefulness and chaos. And a million depositors and minor stockholders of nearly 900 banks that failed, went out of business, or otherwise collapsed in 1930 to the tune of nearly one billion dollars lost or irretrievably frozen, will say amen. It is not, however, as difficult to have capitalism indicted as it would be to bring it to court, and that is the central issue. The social system, it so happens, is not a prisoner behind bars. Were it indicted or even convicted and sentenced *in absentia* it would still walk the earth free and unmolested. The alleged criminal is in supported authority and the would-be prosecution has neither official standing nor power. The prosecutor's is not the usual task of making out a strong case before the court and of effectively presenting it to the jury. He must be able to support the power of his argument with the argument of power, or even if he wins, the court can't enforce sentence. Unless Mr. Thomas, acting for the prosecution, has devised an effective means of achieving that compelling power, his effort must be adjudged at least half unsuccessful, and in basic political activity half a loaf is no better than no loaf. A way out must be more than a good plan of what to do, it must carry an effective recipe of how to do it.

* * *

Eventually, in the ultimate goal, Mr. Thomas stands upon the program of integral socialism: from everyone according to his abilities, to everyone according to his needs. Nearer than that, he proposes the gradual socialization of essential industry, the beginning preferably to be made with sick branches, such as, for instance coal. And while the process may be slowly evolved, no time is to be wasted and the public is to be educated in the comparative merits of sensible social living and decent human behavior. Mr. Thomas would use the project method in the education of Americans. He stresses three essential tasks in the realization of an effective democracy which he considers the stepping stones toward socialism. They are:

1. First and foremost, sincerity and an end of the present inconsistency of an autocratic or nearly autocratic industrial system and an allegedly democratic political system.

2. A second essential is the growth of civil liberty and the conscious encouragement of the discussion of public questions, from many points of view, on the basis of reliable information.

3. The third essential is inquiry into the efficiency of democratic machinery.

The general validity of Mr. Thomas's reconstructive proposals can hardly be attacked except on one point, namely, that their intrinsic value supersedes their fighting quality. This point, however, is of crucial significance if we bear in mind that socialism is not only quantitatively but also qualitatively different from social reformism. The mere arithmetical addition of social reforms on the statute books of the nation won't turn an acquisitive society, of which profit-making is the leit-motif, into the socialist commonwealth which the party of Norman Thomas envisages. Every social reform, from that viewpoint, is valid and considered a step ahead only to the extent that it achieves or tends to achieve a relocation of social power. Socialism is not social reformism multiplied. It is a car from a different garage. Its promoters won't get nearer their aim unless they steadily and progressively accumulate social power, until they can so effectively overturn the applecart that there will be nothing left of the old system. Measured by the standard of struggle for power, "America's Way Out," if Mr. Thomas has put all his cards on the table, is not the road to power. Had ours been the age of reason Mr. Thomas would not be permitted time for the writing of books. Public political office would run after Mr. Thomas; he would not need to run for office and invariably come out a bad third. An honesty so outspoken as his and a candor and a humanism so fine and broad are sorely wanted in a democracy of service. But in a power-ruled society as is ours, the force of logic and the power of persuasion play a subordinate part to that of the harsher weapons in the social arsenal. In a power-oriented society power is the *ultima ratio* and a man-sized struggle for power is the prerequisite of basic change.

* * *

Mr. Mirsky's recent study of Leninism* shows that while a class party may compromise with the state of mind of the members of its own class, and accordingly be more outspoken or less outspoken, or seek to accelerate results by harsher action or by more moderate action at a given time, it cannot compromise its objectives and basic ideas with other classes. Lenin often compromised the issues of his program with the Russian working class in order to assure following and support of the working class. He was a revolutionary realist. But the other kind of compromise, that of Socialist opportunism which Mr. Thomas bespeaks, holds out no promise of success. He insists:

There is still a magnificent challenge in the democratic theory at its best: the theory that the good life is for all men, that there must be equality of opportunity, that the world should be managed as a fellowship in which free men have the voice of citizens.

Of course, this is noble truth, but it is also true as Mr. Thomas says that:

If it requires no argument to prove that if the voice of the people is the voice of God, God says some strange things.

Is there a dependable road to the goal? Perhaps Mr. Thomas has attempted the non-achievable for there is no way out which all Americans can or need travel. A good many Americans need no way out. Those who need it must pave the road to suit their needs. Their politics will have to be based upon the realities of the existing industrial relationship. The power bases of governments are shifting more steadily perhaps than is openly seen, from the legislative halls and administrative cabinets, to the headquarters of what Professor Harold J. Laski calls "the invisible empires of commerce."

The Americans who look for a Socialist way out, will, so it appears, be obliged to wrestle with the problem of power accumulation on a class basis which is the major characteristic of social history in this turbulent century.

* LENIN. By D. S. MIRSKY. Boston: Little, Brown & Co. 1931. $2.50. This book is elsewhere reviewed.

The Chinese Short Story

THE TRAGEDY OF AH QUI, AND OTHER CHINESE STORIES. Translated by KYN YN YU and E. H. F. MILLS. New York: Dial Press. 1931. $2.50.

Reviewed by ALICE TISDALE HOBART

IN a recent number of the SATURDAY REVIEW OF LITERATURE there was a letter from France written by Abel Chevalley in which he said, "The books which everybody has read or heard of can be left to take care of themselves. I am more concerned about those which run the risk of being overlooked in spite of their intrinsic worth." That is how I feel about this so exquisite book "The Tragedy of Ah Qui"—concerned that anything of such intrinsic worth might be overlooked. Not many people seem to know about it and yet it is a very significant book, far more so than its size would seem to indicate, for it makes a very large contribution to our international literature.

Until very recently our fiction, which lays any claim to being literature, has concerned itself with the American or European locale. We have left the intricate complicated background of the Far East with the exception of India to the penny thriller. Only very recently, indeed, have we interested ourselves in the fictional possibilities of the Eastern scene, we are only beginning to ask of stories of Korea, Japan, and China the same art and realism that we demand of stories of our own country. "Thus there came a school of writers" says Lady Hosie in a recent review, "trying honestly to interpret a foreign nation to their own people." But the Oriental background so intricately beautiful, so complicatedly different needs the eastern as well as the western interpretation if we are to understand it in any full measure. For this reason we are indebted to the authors of "The Tragedy of Ah Qui" for this anthology of short stories of modern China is written by a group of young Chinese writers. The book comes to us by way of France. It was then translated into English.

Practically all the stories in the book concern themselves with revolution. In "The Tragedy of Ah Qui," the story from which the book takes its name, we have depicted the psychology of revolution of the Chinese village. In the story "Illusions," revolution's hypnotic violence takes hold upon the sensitive, educated young Chinese. "Divorce" although it deals with the social changes of modern China has to do really with the same theme. When the young husband is distraught because of the suicide of his unwanted wife he takes refuge in violence:

Next morning he received a letter from his old student-friend saying: In your last letter you tell me of your divorce. I approve and admire you. . . . A post in the revolutionary army is vacant. It is for you. Do not look back. Advance fearlessly. The mission of destruction awaits you. At mid-day he was preparing lightheartedly for his departure.

In all the stories there is an atmosphere of disillusioned weariness. It sifts through them like a gray ash, not of melancholy—it is nothing so gloomy—a subtler thing. It is a twist of thought peculiarly Chinese, a weary acceptance at the very beginning of life of its futility.

The stories are all told with great economy of phrase. Many of the descriptions have the terse beauty of Chinese poems. The authors have written with restraint and with a sense of balance such as might be expected of the descendants of a race which for centuries has trained itself in the highest literary forms. These stories indicate that the Chinese literary *flair* is beginning to express itself in modern fiction. If so, this book is a promise of many riches in store for us, besides being a rich gift in itself.

The Saturday Review of LITERATURE

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The Bowling Green

"The Road Back"

BOOKSELLERS have been worried for some time because there was nothing they could conscientiously insist that everyone should read. Their uncertainty is solved. *The Road Back*,* by Erich Maria Remarque, brings the bookseller back to his highest function as a distributor of civilization.

A second story that follows so enormous a success as *All Quiet* is handicapped at first. But no handicap can delay a book so tragically urgent, so pitifully true.

The Road Back is not just a sequel to *All Quiet on the Western Front*. It is its necessary completion. Even more than the earlier book it shows how much more was lost in the War than the men killed in action. It is not an angry book, hardly even bitter. There is immense power in its quiet sadness. The mood in which Remarque writes is that of a poet; occasional soldierly vulgarisms and beachcombings on Cythera are a part of the book's fine human truth. They have touching and tragic value. This is a noble book, and like *All Quiet* it deserves and will have a world-audience. It ends on a note of hopefulness. We need it.

This story is of a group of German soldiers, their return home after the Armistice, their attempts to fit themselves for normal life, their miserable discovery that the longed-for Peace does not solve all problems and that an almost impenetrable barrier has grown up between the men who served at the Front and those who stayed at home. The prologue gives a fine bit of symbolism in the weird cry of a flight of wild geese heard over the trenches one of those last November nights. At first the men think it the wail of some new kind of shell. One of them fires into the flock, hoping for a dinner of roast goose. He misses. "Hard luck," grumbles another. "That might have been the first sensible shot in this whole lousy war." They are by now so accustomed to the routine of trench life that when an unexpected silence falls they are nervously uncomfortable. Then, "once more, dully menacing, comes the noise of gunfire. We grow calm and are almost glad to hear again the familiar, trusty noises of death."

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This is not a book to be described in any exaggerated vein; it is written calmly, with deep and troubling intuition. It is rounded by two superb ironies: first, when the little company of broken and exhausted Germans are overtaken by American outposts, who fraternize with them at once. An American sergeant, who once lived in Dresden, talks German fluently. The Americans barter cigarettes for shoulder-straps, buttons, badges, even scraps of blood-stained paper bandages worn by German wounded. "So you've been in Dresden," one of the Germans keeps saying. "Man, what have we two been fighting about?"—And at the very end of the book, when the narrator and three others are out in the spring woods for a ramble, they come upon a corps of schoolboy cadets going through the maneuvers of sham battle. The veterans gaze in horror, and express their disgust. The pink-cheeked cadets are furious, and call them traitors, cowards, pacifists, bolsheviks.

Ernst Birkholz, a young student who had been in training for a teacher, is the narrator; at least one of his platoon-mates we remember from *All Quiet*, Tjaden, the amorist of bacon and beans and brothels. Getting home isn't quite what they had dreamed. "Tell us all about your experiences, Ernst," says his father. But Ernst thinks to himself, "It was just war all the time. How should a man have experiences there?" So the home folks do the talking, and tell how they have had to smuggle eggs and sausages home inside their clothes. "Did you know Councillor Pleister is dead?" they ask. But the heat of the room is making Ernst sleepy. "What was it," he asks, "H. E. or machine gun?"

It doesn't take the returned soldier long to get fidgety. He has an imperious need of his old companions in disaster, those who understand. He can't concentrate on reading, he has forgotten his civilian table manners, an unguarded anatomical exclamation horrifies his mother to tears. So, in a series of admirable episodes, melodramatic in sequence but each one bearing the form and pressure of complete veracity, Herr Remarque gives us the tragic efforts of these men to recapture their lives. One of their companions is in an asylum with shell-shock. One finds his life wrecked by the gossip of neighbors about an indiscretion of his wife while he was away. One is shot down in a communist demonstration. One kills a man whom he finds with his own girl in a bawdy café. One, tainted with syphilis from a leave in Brussels, commits suicide. One, in despair, rejoins the army. Summarized so, this gives a falsely cruel impression. There is misery and sorrow in this book, but there is also beauty of feeling on almost every page. We are not likely to forget the episode when Ernst, in his restless uneasiness, goes to revisit the brooks and fields of his childhood. He takes with him a pickle-jar, to catch minnows in. And while so occupied, he realizes that his mind has been analyzing the meadow with a view to digging trenches and organizing a defensive system.

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Ernst and several other ex-soldiers return to the Normal School to finish their course. When the principal makes them a speech about the twenty-one members of their class who "met the glorious death of arms, twenty-one heroes who sleep the long sleep beneath the green grasses," they cannot restrain themselves. One of the ex-soldiers bursts out:

> "Green grasses! . . . Green grasses!" he stutters. "Long sleep? In the mud of shell holes they are lying, knocked rotten, ripped in pieces, gone down into the bog. . . . Green grasses! This is not a singing lesson . Hero's death! And what sort of a thing do you suppose that was, I wonder? Would you like to know how young Hoyer died? All day long he lay out in the wire screaming, and his guts hanging out of his belly like macaroni. Then a bit of shell took off his fingers and a couple of hours later another chunk off his leg, and still he lived; and with his other hand he would keep trying to pack back his intestines, and when night fell at last he was done. And when it was dark we went out to get him and he was full of holes as a nutmeg grater. . . . Now you go and tell his mother how he died . . . if you have so much courage."

There are many ghastly passages, but not one that is put in for the sake of sensation. Ernst's recurring nightmare of the English officer he blew to pieces with a grenade, the procession of the War Cripples, the trial of Albert Trosske, the scene in the asylum, these if quoted here in excerpt would give a false impression. This is one of those brave books, written out of intense suffering, that are not afraid to be ugly where it is necessary. I prefer to quote what Ernst says to himself when, as a teacher of young school children, he sees them looking at him with respectful trust:

> Suddenly I got a spasm over the heart. Here I stand before you, one of the hundreds of thousands of bankrupt men in whom the war destroyed every belief and almost every strength. What should I teach you? Should I tell you that in twenty years you will be dried-up and crippled, maimed in your freest impulses, all pressed mercilessly into the selfsame mould? Should I tell you that all learning, all culture, all science is nothing but hideous mockery, so long as mankind makes war in the name of God and humanity with gas, iron, explosive and fire? Should I explain to you that the books you hold in your hands are but nets with which men design to snare your simple souls, to entangle you in the undergrowth of fine phrases, and in the barbed wire of falsified ideas?

With grossness and tenderness, humor and profound compassion, out of that tormented solitude that comes upon all who love men, Remarque has written and Arthur Wheen translated this fine book. They have extenuated nothing, and if they had told us only that there was sold in Germany a kind of toilet paper which had printed on it "the words of great men about the War," it would have been worth while. But the beauty and courage of the book cannot be summarized in a review. It must be read, lent, quoted, reprinted, circulated without end. Will it help? Perhaps it will; if we are worth helping. It does one good to see an honest man's flame of genius put to human service. Whatever the words may mean, I say God bless him.

CHRISTOPHER MORLEY.

At the invitation of the Director of the Hall of Fame, the *Brooklyn Eagle*, of which Walt Whitman was editor for two years, has undertaken a public subscription to provide the bust and tablet of the "Good Gray Poet" to be unveiled at the Colonnade on May 14th next. Checks may be drawn to the order of the Bursar of New York University and sent to the *Brooklyn Eagle*.

* THE ROAD BACK. By ERICH MARIA REMARQUE. Translated from the German by A. W. WHEEN. To be published May 11 by Little, Brown & Company. $2.50.

Constructive Scepticism

A PAGAN'S PILGRIMAGE. By LLEWELYN POWYS. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co. 1931. $2.50.

Reviewed by HENRY C. TRACY

THOSE persons who, after reading Mr. Powys's "Cradle of God" asked him to give a more circumstantial account of the journey that inspired it, may represent a larger public than we had envisaged—a quite considerable group of those who, having been disillusioned in respect to pietistic veneration for Christian symbols, care for a revaluation of those events and characters on which the symbolism is based. If this is so, and if they are willing to let a sceptic perform this service, they will not be disappointed in the book their interest in the matter has evoked. Llewelyn Powys, although a sceptic and a professed materialist, is not at all indifferent to names, places, and faiths with which Christian theogony is concerned. The present volume shows, indeed, an almost passionate feeling for those realities of person and place out of which arose the staggering illusions—such they are to him—of theophany and resurrection, and of a theology enmeshed in miracles.

Powys brings to his task a poignant sense of reality, material and sensuous, that fecundates every image and searches out its roots in the past. Every clod, weed, beast, bird, and wayfarer is vividly real to him as of the present, and out of such impacts he constructs no mirage but an equally substantial evocation of the past. Reversing the saying of Agrippa, we are inclined to exclaim, Almost thou persuadest me to be a sceptic—provided so pregnant a reassertion of values can come out of a sceptical independence of mind. But it is plain that the fecundating cause is not a negative. In it are somehow merged all the positives of a religious upbringing, including a vital love for those associations, whether classical or religious, out of which the drapery of all heroic figures is made. There is here no petulant hate for those figures, no impish desire to tear away the drapes, but only a consuming impulse to see them as they are. This impulse has behind it a powerful artistic urge, as when it evokes on Carmel a prophet implacable, fanatic, appears in the flesh: the prophet Elijah. Similarly, on the lake of Galilee, and at the taking of its curious fish, the sons of Zebedee appear. Neither they nor the central figure of the Gospel episodes lose anything in reality, in worth even, by this scepticism of the author's; and this without the slightest compromise with a supernaturalism for which he has no use.

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A full half of the book is devoted to explorations, on foot, of those ports accessible to travellers along the eastern coasts of the Mediterranean, before the Holy Land is reached. Patras, Corinth, Athens, Rhodes, and ports in Cyprus give each its quota of such episodes, all of them dealt with in a direct, unconventional manner modeled (as the preface of the book tells us) somewhat on that of Tom Coryat, and therefore permissibly eccentric according to mood. (Coryat, if I remember correctly, is one of the "Thirteen Worthies" described by Powys in an earlier book.) In "Black Laughter" Llewelyn Powys proved himself a good observer and a pleasing writer on nature, not merely a literary man in the African scene. In this volume he is again naturistic in his preoccupations, and interested in wild things because they are wild. His bias however is philosophical, not scientific; and, in the end, it drives him to a resolution of the life-enigma in terms that should be consoling to others who take the pagan view. This final statement will be found at the end of the book. In very simple terms, but in a manner most felicitous, Powys gives his reason for feeling that we have not been betrayed. Although there is shame and suffering here, "for every spirit come to life for its moment of duration there is small room for complaint. We have been permitted to pass certain hours in the 'coasts of light.'" Which forcibly suggests this conclusion to any one who has freshly in mind the powerful evocations of the book: if a man takes the delight that is here taken in the visible world, it will seem to him a privilege to have been here. If, on the other hand, one found no such gratification in the common pageant of existence, it is easy to see how the mind might breed either a sense of satiety or one of injustice, because of its engrossment in satisfactions that cloy if indulged in, and madden if they cannot be obtained.

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The Contemporary Soul

THERE is probably no word that is more unfashionable in contemporary discourse than the word soul, no theme less congenial to the current imagination than salvation. The newer psychologies have substituted complex inquiries into the mechanisms of behavior for the traditional notion of a presiding essence or psyche that governs man's actions and truly constitutes being. The new moralities, in their concern with how a man may best live in this world, seem remote enough from the medieval problem of how he was to save his soul in the next.

Now the medieval moralist when he spoke of the soul knew definitely, though abstractly, what he meant by it; the medieval theologian knew well enough what he meant by salvation. The disembodied principle of intelligence, pure and angelic, was to find peace in the eternal beatitude of beholding that pure and absolute Being which is God. The modern is blinded to the fact that he is concerned for his soul and for its salvation by the fact that he scarcely believes in the first, and that there is such a confusion of tongues and doctrines with regard to the second.

There is, indeed, in the first place, a very considerable current of belief that no soul of man—about whose salvation, none the less, the modern man worries so interminably—exists at all. The gradual extension of the mechanistic hypothesis has come in time to pass from the stars and atoms to the natural life of man.

There is a personality about which a man is at once proud and ashamed, that self which seems to survive somehow—self-recognized amid so many vicissitudes and transformations. But that self has suffered at the hands of psychologists and sociologists a thousand dissolutions. It is disintegrated into the statistics of the laboratory, into the formulae of the psycho-analysts and the sociologists. In very truth it is difficult in these days for a man to call his soul his own.

Yet parallel to this disintegration of the psyche, there has come in contemporary thought an unprecedented meditation upon the self. No Pauline apostle, awake to the conviction of sin, could be more completely agonized about the self than is the contemporary harassed by his doubts and exasperations. What is the inferiority complex but the traditional sense of sin, what medieval ever sensed himself more lost than does the modern awakened to the transcience or emptiness of love or life or nature, the shipwreck of a world where there is nothing left to worship or adore? No Augustine, canvassing for three long books of his "Confessions" the quarrel in him between will and desire, could feel more deeply than do many contemporaries the quarrel in them between love and lust, between the flesh and the spirit. No Christian mystic could be more harassed than Proust over the evanescence of sensations and of memories and the struggle to keep hold of some portion of the self that will survive the flux of time.

But even more exact is the parallel between the modern and the medieval in the exacerbated reflection upon the self defeated by worldliness and by the world. St. Paul long ago scolded and implored the Christians at Corinth and at Rome to keep the spirit undefiled by the flesh. The contemporary sees on all sides everything that he has in the past subsumed under the category of the spirit of man being assailed, soiled, and frustrated by things, by nature, and by society. There is no quiet realm of eternity in which the balance may be rectified. Love defeated in this world is defated forever, and it is in *this* world that love and every other idealism is defeated. They are defeated, indeed, not simply by the fact that they are crushed, but by the fact that the conditions of modern industrial and social life generate a mood in which those very higher values come to seem negligible or futile or ridiculous. One begins by doubting the existence of the soul; one ends by doubting whether its interests can be fulfilled, or whether in the long run they matter. The soul becomes lost in the world, and ends by itself becoming worldly.

It is from such worldliness that, as in the past, salvation is being sought. The whole attempt of contemporary moral reflection may be said to be that of finding some way of life whereby the modern may find integrity or peace.

It were best, perhaps, to canvass briefly those enemies of the soul of man—meaning by that expression the enemies of his moral and esthetic interests—about which the contemporary is peculiarly harassed. Most serious, beyond question, is the fact that the new psychologies, especially as practised or implied by men of letters, have made man not so much disbelieve in his own spirit as lose his respect for it. The net effect of recent inquiry, and especially of recent literary discussion, has been to make the modern incredibly scornful of his own idealisms. Love is seen to be simply lust on parade. Generosity becomes assertion, roundabout and polite, of the desire for attention or for praise; and reason itself is found to be mostly arguments superficially good for motives irrefutably bad. It is with such mordant analysis, or illustrations of it, that a hundred recent novels are filled. We are taught to behold and to consider not those elements of human nature which might give us an inkling of potential glory, but rather those aspects or evidences of it that teach us to range ourselves with apes and peacocks rather than with heroes or angels. It is not so much life that is beastly as we that are.

LITTLE, one is tempted to say, has more crucified the contemporary meditating upon himself, than this sense of irremediable evil, of something beyond salvage and not deserving it. It is not for nothing that three centuries of philosophy have colored and poisoned with subjectivity our estimates of the nature of things and the goods in nature. How can anything be estimable when we that do the estimation are seen to be suspect and compact of self-deceit and self-fraud, self-loathing and self-destruction? At least, our believing predecessors, if they saw no worth in themselves, knew where else to look for it. If they were obsessed with the yoke of sin, they knew where grace was abounding. We know, too, or make confused gestures toward knowing. Some simple faith tells us that some simple formula will cure us of an inferiority complex. Some innocence makes us believe that a formula of "disinterestedness" or "adult adjustment," of "objectivity" or "socialization," will cure us of the agony of aimlessness or of despair. There will be occasion later to inquire into some of these new faiths, these reliances at once touching and fantastic. It requires for the present only that the fact be noted, that the new age still cherishes the ancient tribulation.

But if the current imagination is troubled by disbelief in its own worth or its own values, it has still other enemies of the soul to reckon with. Traditional Christianity, with a shrewd instinct, saw itself, as all forthright religions have seen themselves, as standing foursquare against worldliness and the world. The current plaint—it is not a new one—is that the world is too much with us. But it is a new realm that impinges upon and oppresses us, an order in which speed, luxury, and mechanization play an unprecedented part. Luxury is clearly not a novelty; the satirists of ancient Rome had it as their subject matter. But material comfort and physical indulgence have probably never before been available to so many nor have they been before to so many a predominant obsession. Even in a palace, said Marcus Aurelius, it is possible to live well. But, as the ancient sage pointed out, it required a special effort under the circumstances. And there have been few epochs and few parts of the world where the opportunity to battle against the enticements of material well-being were as open to as many as they are or until recently have been in America.

But most serious of the enemies of the soul of man, in the eyes of reflective observers, is standardization. It is futile to inquire how much the machine age and machine methods have rendered impossible that individuality in which alone any life acquires dignity, interest and character. There is no reason to suppose that the electric refrigerator and motor transport impede the good life. But there is very good reason for suspecting the subtler forms of mechanization, the regimentation brought about by mass schooling, the standard provision by routine thousands of amusements designed for mediocre millions, the chain stores of culture designed to make available to an innumerable democracy what is in essence possible only to an intellectually aristocratic few. It is not simply that the glitter of false goods is distracting the contemporary from characteristic intellectual and esthetic interests, but that the currency of these latter is itself being debased. The very essence of intelligence is discrimination, the character of taste is to *have* character and definition, and these are being imperilled by the spread of an education whose standards are mediocrity, and whose appeal is merely promiscuous.

But there are special recent variations of the modern malaise that need examination. It did not require the twentieth century to discover the sorrowful character of time. But it remained for the modern to explore more exactly into the nature of time itself, and to derive a private sting of melancholy from the explorations. For time cannot any longer be considered simply as the illusory character of a merely shadow world. It seems to be woven into the very character of ultimate existence. Nature is ultimately nothing but the flow of all experience, and all experience is set, as it were, in the moving matrix of time. The permanent is seen to be simply a pause in reflection, a stability which action momentarily achieves. Even space and the physical world have, in the hands of the contemporary physicist, become a pictorial expression, a visual function of time.

There is no doubt but the discovery of, the emphasis upon, change has about it a certain glory, at once stalwart and romantic. But the more introspective have found in this consideration that time has forced upon them less occasion for congratulation. For change remains change, and change as often means loss as gain, and once in every life it means extinction. Moreover, if time alone be real, as in certain quarters we are led to believe that it is, then nothing else is really so. This discovery may be the fruit of a subtle metaphysics, as it is in Bergson, but it is an insight that any sensitive person can make for himself, and one which his life and memory rather than any speculation have led him to. For the philosophers have simply confirmed what the sensitive have long known. Mutation is discovered first not among things but in one's self, one's loves, one's friends, and one's memories. The appeal, half delicious, half depressing, that the writings of Marcel Proust have for many readers lies in the skilful way he has of evoking past time and the realities, perishing and precarious, of our memories. The instant, so lovely and so living, is qualified by memories of the past that is irrevocably gone. We scarcely live at all, save in the illusions, the distorted perspectives, of memory, and the imaginations of which the materials of memory form a large and illusive part. Our life is a succession of or rather a river of indistinguishable instants, each scarcely isolable from its predecessors and each in turn unreal. Time, by whose indeterminate future we were to save ourselves, turns out to be the river in which those constantly vanishing moments we call ourselves must drown.

FROM these and similar awarenesses the contemporary, though he would shun the expression, is looking about to be saved. Just before the war a faith in a Wellsian code of coöperative science captured the imagination of arden young liberals. The war destroyed that hope along with the young men it destroyed. There are still those who trust to coöperative intelligence to produce a clear and feer world. But there is no lack of those, of whom Spengler is merely the most articulate, who see no hope in the future, and a possible complete collapse of that civilization that Athens, Florence, and Chartres enshrine. As in early Christian times, therefore, the social imagination turns to any current mystery, any faith in which by partaking, by becoming a communicant, a man may be saved.

An examination of these living systems of salvation would reveal how various is the nature of these faiths, and how not unlike mystery religions they are. They are ways of life or of a life beyond life; they have their esoteric language and their prophets or half-legendary heroes; they beckon all those who are heavy laden to come to them and they will give them rest.

There is one embittered or ensoured group who have indeed thought themselves beyond the traps of any new scheme of salvation. The modernists in cynicism, scepticism, and despair have thought that by

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by Irwin Edman

a complete disillusion they could at least save themselves from ever again being taken in. "We prefer rather"—writes Mr. Joseph Wood Krutch at the conclusion of his "The Modern Temper"—"to die as men rather than to live as animals." To the disillusionist at least one virtue remains, that of intellectual *askesis*.

Not many can succeed in finding peace in the stoic admission of uncharming truths. It is improbable that even the disillusionist finds it thus. There is usually no real gaiety in his laughter, and too rhetorical a courage in his facing of the truth. Most men still wish to be saved, and there are in general to be observed certain common characteristics in current ways to peace.

The chief of these that impresses the observer is the faith in intelligence. Francis Bacon first gave publicity to the idea (he was certainly not its discoverer nor, even among his contemporaries, the best illustration) of the belief, now echoed by every liberal thinker on two continents, that intelligence may save the individual soul and rescue mankind. Led by writers as different as H. G. Wells and John Dewey, there has grown up the remarkable faith in many men that what men once left to God they can now attain of their own disciplined and controlled action. Creative intelligence, scientific control, the technique of the laboratory—by whatever name the faith may be called—the modern man in increasing numbers has believed that by his own intelligence he might be saved. No catastrophe of war, no meeting of personal problems that at once transcend or utterly defeat intelligence, can depress the ardent. The faith remains, and it has its own poets as well as prophets.

The creed obviously has its heretics, and its dialectical and matter-of-fact difficulties. Even the most romantic adherents of the possibilities of intelligent control grant that death and unrequited love cannot quite be solved by its efforts. There are those, too, who, despairing of the world that the war has left us, bemoaning the change in a civilization that seems ultimately to consist in nothing but change, have tried to retreat to some indefeasible realm, as snug and sure as a protected harbor, as certain and eternal as a traditional Paradise. These have to go back to Plato or to Hindu philosophy for their salvation. Only in the passive beholding of unchanging essences, of the forms of all being, and in the eternal postures and gestures which existence may take, can salvation be found. By giving up all save irreducible essences, by abnegeting all but the eternal, sure, and non-existent, these (Santayana is their most eloquent spokesman) count on being at peace. Only by giving up the whole world of existence may they save their own souls, become the pure disinterested spectators of what always is and never has been. They reduce life to the hearing of a music, pure and bodiless, in the uncaring hearing of which alone is the bliss of disinterestedness found. It is an austere enough Heaven, and only a metaphysician or a musician of the more metaphysical sort can enjoy himself therein.

There are others who will not thus retreat to Platonism, but like the Platonists cannot feel happy in the contemporary world. They are homesick for what is dead, nostalgic for a Heaven of which the cultures, languages and traditions of the past are echoes and memories. They would escape, not by fleeing to eternal timelessness, but by returning to the equally changeless—because irrevocable—world of the past. It may be with some the revival of an ancient national culture, its literature, its modes, its language, of which the Gaelic revival in Ireland, or the to-do about Welsh or Basque may be cited. Out of the colorlessness and confusion of a promiscuous modern world, these homesick revivalists hope to recover the clear thread, the unconfused light of their own national traditions.

IT may again be a retreat to an ancient faith. Much certainly of the modernistic embracing of Catholicism by hitherto sceptical and disillusioned intellectuals is the clutching at some hold, clear and definitive, in an intellectual realm where there is nothing but nirvana to cling to. Thus we have the spectacle of Jews long without any belief turning to the code of their fathers and the ethics of their prophets, and Protestants who were scarcely even that, turning with fanaticism to Rome. In these cases, unless one is very much mistaken, it is not religion in the sense of an experience or a theology by which they as believers are coerced, but a religion in the old Roman sense of something by which one may be bound, a theme in the light of which life gains order, a tradition which gives it a dignity that cannot be corrupted and a significance that cannot be questioned. For all the parade of intellectuality that accompanies these conversions, it is clear that they are the fruits of sentimental nostalgias. It is homesickness that makes the converted intellectuals call these thin intellectual adoptions of ancient faiths a going home.

There is, again, a school of writers and of readers who are indulging in a new kind of naiveté, so deliberate as to seem almost the last word in sophistication. It consists in avoiding articulateness, in dodging sentiment, in evading thought. The fauxnâifs, Wyndham Lewis has called them; but it is not our purpose here to call them names but simply to call attention to them. Like the heroes in a Hemingway novel, they trust only to the directness of action and of immediate animal feeling in a world where there is nothing else to be trusted, and where even these are likely to be clouded and impeded by thought or words.

And there are finally those who, sickening of both the futility of mere animal feeling or strenuous action, retreat, as some few in all ages have retreated, to a mystical absorption, an abandoning of the categories of life and nature and society for a rapture, vast, sweet, and indiscriminative. By refusing to be bound by compulsions of action or thought or things, these hope to see the inenarrable godhead of delight, to be caught up into a not impossible ecstasy, like St. Catherine or St. John of the Cross, to pass beyond the dark night of the soul to a rapturous alone with the Alone.

It is not the intention of this paper to question the validity of each or of any of these faiths. That must be left for some other place, possibly for some other critic. They are noted here rather as illustrations of the central theme. Each of these ways of life has become a cult, a promise, a hope, and a mystery. Each is a symptom of that still persisting quest by which the soul, in this as in past ages, recites a soliloquy of its own hopes and the obstacles it meets in itself and in things, in society, and in nature; the ways, sublime, pitiable, or ridiculous, by which it tries to find a home, an anchorage, or an escape. The language changes, the quest is still the same.

But it might at least be suggested that the mere conception of salvation in this world might itself be an element in its realization. Escapes from actuality are always either illusory or bought at a great and destroying price. The sharp rumor of reality pierces the dream mist in which we may try to wrap ourselves. Actuality remains distressingly what it is and distressingly what we must return to. At least the disappointment may be averted of romantic hopes unfulfilled. At least we may be spared the sullenness and the petulance of children deprived of an unreachable moon. Such a concern with the inevitable terms of felicity would find that the soul of man might not so much be saved from corruption or disaster as fulfilled. What the flame is to the candle that the soul is to the body. In a decently organized society and in a modestly conceived life, the flame might burn clearly and freely.

The elements of happiness are what they always have been. It is too late, if one would, to escape science and the machine, just as it is silly to make these the canons of living or believe that they are, in their present forms, eternal. But eternal or not, they are our current instruments for long standing human resources for the good life. The awareness of the senses, the furniture of Heaven and Earth are present to us as they are present to anybody in any age. If there are certain romantic goods we have had to give up, they are only such as were in any case illusions. The stimulations and excitements of the senses, no less than the anchorage and repose of friendship and the domestic affections, the patrimony of the past,—all these are still ours, as they have belonged to former generations. All that is new are our instruments, all that is lost our illusions. It is a challenge, not an elegy that should be the theme of our discourse, not the violins on a dying fall, but the trumpet call.

Lichfield's Blue

THE SINGING SWAN. By MARGARET ASHMUN. New Haven: Yale University Press. 1931. $3.50.

Reviewed by CHARLES DAVID ABBOTT
University of Colorado

ANNA SEWARD, with an almost sublime self-confidence, placed herself among the immortals. This assumption of the robes of immortality was not unnatural; the world of her own day did its best to convince her of her importance, and she had a mind easily persuaded. She was petted and admired, her verse was praised ecstatically and promised an eternity of readers. But the years have dealt unkindly with the Swan of Lichfield. Her pedestal in the Hall of Fame is broken, and even the records of her former position are musty with neglect. Her complacency and undeniable smugness are perhaps justly rewarded with this oblivion, and her poetry has certainly found its proper valuation; but in not knowing the story of her elegant life, of her intimate connections with the celebrities of Farmer George's reign, the world has missed rare entertainment.

Miss Ashmun in this delicate study has made the most of her opportunities. Here was biographical material obviously awaiting the right feminine hand—a rougher touch might so easily have spoiled it—and it had the good luck to meet its exactly proper master. The result is a book which provides not only frequent and illuminating glimpses of the giants of the age, as these biographies of minor figures ought always to do, but also the authentic picture, complete in all details, of the central personage herself with all her exquisite femininity and punctilious bluestocking air. To twentieth century admirers of the Georgians, Anna Seward appears inevitably as a humorous, a slightly ridiculous, figure. Her jealousies, notably that which made her condescend to Dr. Johnson, her ambitions, her grand manner, even her sharp tongue, cannot be taken quite seriously. She is the epitome of mock-importance, confident in her acclaimed grandeur, never suspecting her posthumous obscurity. Posterity always finds the situation amusing. And Miss Ashmun, without any lack of sympathy but with a calm acceptance of her subject's essential smallness, has shown her in scenes where her human failings, her pompous but lovable personality, are clearly limned. She has understood that the woman underneath the Muse's robes is far more interesting than the poetess. Lichfield's Swan is more fascinating as a bit of period decoration than as the nightingale's imitator.

Suggestions for perpetuating the memory of Arnold Bennett, says the London *Observer*, are being consideerd in Stoke-on-Trent. Three ideas are put forward. The first is that a plaque should be fixed to the house where Arnold Bennett was born; the second that the author's personal letters to old friends in the Potteries should be collected and placed in the custody of the City Librarian; and, thirdly, the acquisition, if possible, of the manuscripts of Arnold Bennett's books.

Professor Irwin Edman, professor of philosophy at Columbia University, has already acquired an enviable reputation for the penetration and sympathetic insight of his philosophic essays and his criticisms of literature of a philosophic kind. He belongs to that school which, basing its studies upon a wide knowledge of the results of science, and deeply concerned with the currents of modern thinking, has constantly endeavored to go forward to some new synthesis, rather than to take refuge in the past. Mr. Edman at present is studying in Europe upon a leave of absence from his university. Mr. Edman has published "Human Traits and Their Social Significance" (Houghton-Mifflin), "Richard Kane Looks at Life" (Houghton-Mifflin), and is about to publish "The Contemporary and His Soul" (Cape & Smith), which contains this essay in a different form.

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Books of Special Interest

Credit the Bourbons

FRANCE UNDER THE BOURBON RESTORATION. By FREDERICK B. ARTZ. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. 1931. $4.50.

Reviewed by ARNOLD WHITRIDGE

"The sole purpose of this book," writes Professor Artz, "is to present the life and activity of the years 1814-1830 in their various aspects, and thus to contribute to a better understanding of an important period in French history that has been long neglected." A glance at the excellent bibliography at the end of the book hardly suggests that this period has been neglected, but the innumerable histories and memoirs of the Bourbon Restoration are inclined to specialize on politics or literature, whereas Professor Artz has tried to compress the multifarious activities of bankers and scientists, as well as the more familiar careers of the statesmen and artists, into a volume of four hundred pages. The book contains a mass of well-digested information that is nowhere else easily attainable. Occasionally we could wish that the author had devoted more attention to the art of narrative, but he writes for the information of students and scholars rather than for the enjoyment of the general reader. This is unfortunate as the Revolution of 1830, being largely a literary revolution, lends itself to a literary treatment.

The peculiar failings of the Bourbons have distracted attention from the extraordinary prosperity that France enjoyed under the Restoration. Even Charles X, who probably learned less and forgot less than any member of his family, had his flashes of genius. However blind he may have been to the trend of liberalism he was responsible for the victory of Navarino, which restored the naval prestige of France, and the conquest of Algiers, the enormous importance of which no one in 1830 seems to have suspected. The financial achievement of the government of the Restoration was no less remarkable. The Duc de Richelieu, an old emigré, devoted himself wholeheartedly to the task of liberating the occupied territory. The adventure of the Hundred Days cost France about two milliards, but in spite of this terrific drain on the treasury, twelve years after the battle of Waterloo, France was again the richest country in Europe. In methods of farming the period of the Restoration was again one of steady development. The Government passed excellent laws for the protection of forests, the silk industry prospered, new canals were built, and the highways which had fallen into disrepair during the Empire became once again the envy of all Europe.

Industrially France may have lagged behind England. As late as 1838, when railroad construction was well under way across the Channel, Thiers still considered railroads "playthings for children and for Parisian pleasure seekers." But in France the industrial revolution, because it came so slowly, was accomplished without any economic dislocation. The small farmer was better off than he ever had been, instead of being forced to emigrate or being driven into a factory as he was in England.

If we turn to literature and the fine arts the record of the Bourbons is certainly better than that of Robespierre or Napoleon. The École des Beaux Arts, the greatest art school in the world, dates from 1830. The music of Berlioz, the painting of Delacroix and Corot, the poetry of Lamartine, Vigny, Hugo, and Alfred de Musset, gave a glow to the dying French monarchy that had never graced the Republic or the Empire. Robespierre effectually crushed every form of artistic expression. If he had lived a few days longer the actors of the Comédie Francaise would all have been sent to the guillotine. They had committed the unpardonable sin of depicting on the stage a virtuous nobleman, and in the eyes of the Committee of Public Safety virtuous noblemen were incompatible with liberty. Napoleon's patronage was just as disastrous to literature as Robespierre's persecution. He regarded literature and the arts as useful props of the imperial règime. "People complain that we have no poets," he once remarked, "that is the fault of the Minister of Home Affairs." In other words, literature was merely a commodity to be fostered by the state like the sugar beet culture or the silk industry. Is it surprising that the Muses stifled by such ghastly efficiency?

Louis XVIII and Charles X were more successful in enlisting the arts under their banner. Chateaubriand, the literary dictator of the Restoration, was also the leader of the Ultra royalists. The great romantic poets were all, in their youth at any rate, ardent supporters of the monarchy. The assassination of the Duc de Berri inspired Victor Hugo with an ode that the old king himself recited with dimmed eyes, before a mournful circle of intimates. On the birth of the Duc de Bordeaux Victor Hugo produced another ode still more enthusiastically royalist. The king was so touched by these expressions of loyalty that he gave the young poet a pension of a thousand francs. When Charles X was crowned at Rheims with all the pomp and ceremony of medieval tradition, Lamartine wrote an ode on the occasion and was given the Legion of Honor. Six years later when Charles X had lost his popularity and was being forced once again into exile, Alfred de Vigny would still have given his life for the monarchy if only the monarchy had showed a vestige of leadership.

It is true that before 1830 romanticism had begun to veer away from the church and the monarchy. There could be no permanent union between the ardent young spirits who were testing life in all directions and the embittered Ultras who persisted in ignoring everything that had happened since 1789. The Revolution of 1830 was above all a literary revolution. It is this that makes it so fascinating to our generation. We keep our literature and politics in water-tight compartments, but in 1830 politics was only a prolongation of literature. The censorship of Marion Delorme, the preface of Cromwell, the first night of Hernani, seemed to the younger men like so many campaigns in a literary war of liberation. Just as soon as Polignac, with the approval of Charles X, undertook to suspend the liberty of the press the revolution was inevitable. In vain did Charles X dangle the bauble of Algiers before the eyes of the populace. France, at that moment, was not interested in foreign conquest or economic stability. The people wanted their liberties, as defined by the Charter of 1814, recognized, and if the King and his clerical advisers refused to recognize them, then the King must make way for a government that would.

Whatever its faults or virtues the Bourbon family has played a big part in the history of Europe. It is just a hundred years since Charles X trod the weary path of exile, and now we read of another Bourbon, a far better man than Charles X, being forced to relinquish his throne. Once again, in Spain in 1931 as in France in 1830, a great nation has decided that prosperity is not enough.

In Moronia

LIFE AMONG THE LOWBROWS. By ELEANOR ROWLAND WEMBRIDGE. Boston: Houghton Mifflin. 1931. $2.50.

Reviewed by BEULAH AMIDON

FROM the Land of Moronia, Mrs. Wembridge has brought us a colorful book of traveller's tales. Moronia is all around us, a social fourth dimension which few writers would have the imagination or the patience to explore for themselves. But the Referee of the Juvenile Court in Cleveland knows it well. With almost unbelievable wisdom, humor, and understanding she has studied its customs, its boundaries, its inhabitants. Those who dwell there, she tells us, are the people "who must lead a citizens' life without a citizen's equipment." And the lowbrows that Mrs. Wembridge knows best, she reminds us, are not only dull-witted and inarticulate, but exasperating besides. That the law with which the youngsters who throng her courtroom are in conflict is frequently, to them, the law of an unknown dimension is abundantly plain, as these stories bring to us Jenny and Johnny of the low IQ, helpless in the face of arithmetic, abstractions, tomorrow's needs or the moral code.

This book will bother librarians. It fits into none of their neat categories. It is filled with people, but it is not fiction. It is wiser than science, for it takes account of soul and spirit as it discusses body and mind. And it cannot be shelved with sociology, for it turns away from "man in society" to discover human beings.

In these seventeen sketches we hear the language of Moronia, where much of our speech is a hazy blur, and "You said it," "Hell's bells," "You're crazy with the heat," is the uncomplicated idiom in which business and love-making, quarrelling and preaching must go on.

We are shown the manners and customs of the Girl Tribe, with its cheap ambitions, its sleazy loyalties, its flashes of understanding and hard commonsense. Here are the tight-drawn moral codes of Corinne who "sins" to buy luxuries, Pauline only to buy necessities, Nina who "wouldn't take money for it," who "goes wild for fun."

Mrs. Wembridge points out some of the pitfalls we have set for the moron—the installment salesmen Flora cannot refuse; the academic education that profits Phoebe nothing; our easy laws of marriage, our complicated fictions of divorce. But freedom to choose is Jenny's chief peril, for Jenny has nothing within herself on which to rely. In the spongy quagmire of her mind, there is no standard—of ethics, logic, even of taste. The one hope for Jenny, Mrs. Wembridge concludes, is in a Victorian code, dictating her behavior as the iron conventions of style dictate her clothes. Were Jenny bred in a manner-code that would lead her to shudder at Victorian misbehavior as she would have shuddered at long skirts in 1929, at "chemise dresses" in 1931, "Plato could have his virtues and the catechism its deadly sins."

And if the Victorian code will save Jenny from herself, perhaps it will save us from Jenny. For, Mrs. Wembridge reminds us, Moronia is in and of your life and mine, and Sam and Illy, going their vague, irresponsible ways, leave us no safety and no peace: "Their children die from epidemics like flies, but they pass their germs on to our children before they go. Their children see ours in automobiles, and steal them from us. Our girls must dress in fashion, and so must theirs, even though our boys pay the bills. All of them flock gladly toward any frivolity or indecency we commercialize. And ever the grim chorus chants monotonously in the background—'The villainy you teach us we will execute, and it shall go hard but we will better the instruction.' It is too dreadful and too stern a refrain for such frail little clowns as Chuck and Flora, and their children. And in the final tragedy, who are the villains and who the victims—They or We?"

A Defensive Alliance

THE LITTLE ENTENTE. By JOHN O. CRANE. New York: The Macmillan Company. 1931. $2.50.

Reviewed by L. R. E. PAULIN

BOUND together as they were by the common purpose of maintaining the new *status quo* in the Balkans, the three member States of the Little Entente have greatly strengthened their position by means of this defensive alliance. It has afforded all of them a measure of security, which, standing alone, none of them could have hoped to attain. It is no less obviously true that in promoting the Little Entente, France had in mind to serve its own special interests, just as it did in the alliance with Poland after the Russo-Polish war of 1919-20. In emergency it planned to be well fortified against Soviet Russia and Germany.

In the opinion of John O. Crane, for four years private secretary to President Masaryk and long a resident of Prague, the Czechoslovak - Rumanian - Jugoslav entente has justified its existence by demonstrating its capacity "to hold things together in Central Europe," and establishing a firm foundation of peace and coöperation. The essential thing is that there be time, where many causes of conflict and rancor exist, to work out durable solutions of international relations. Every Balkan State has to face grave internal problems, financial, economic and administrative. They all share the same difficulties at home; on their success in overcoming them depends very largely the welfare of Europe. With support and sympathy they should come through.

There are many disturbing factors in the existing situation, and their elimination seems far off. The agitation by Hungary over treaty revision never ceases. Frontier rectification on several fronts is a question that will not down. Roumania holds Transylvania, taken from Hungary, and Bessarabia, taken from Russia. In both provinces Roumanian policy toward race minorities has been harsh and provocative of dissatisfaction. From Bulgaria the Macedonians, as ever, stir up trouble. In Jugoslavia there are considerable German and Magyar minorities, and the Serbs and Croats remain at odds. Czechoslovakia is apprehensive lest an Austro-German union be effected, and it be enveloped by Germany. Roumania fears Soviet Russia in the East and Jugoslavia is struggling to hold its own against Fascist Italy, which by a binding alliance has made a buffer state of Albania.

These external complications, in addition to the instability of their own governments, keep on edge the nerves of the three members of the Little Entente. In spite of all, the defensive alliance of 1920 remains unshaken, and as a diplomatic unit they work closely with the Great Powers at Geneva for the pacification of Europe.

The biographer of nations analyses the last empire

ENGLAND'S CRISIS

by ANDRÉ SIEGFRIED
Author of "America Comes of Age"

The splendid isolation of Great Britain is at an end. She is faced with an economic crisis, the effects of which will be world-shaking. What is her future as a world power? What is her own attitude toward the dilemma of her decline? "André Siegfried's survey of England's crisis is the most penetrating analysis of present conditions in England made by any foreign observer. He is friendly and understanding, although ruthlessly critical. With the keen rapier touch of French intelligence, he has found the weak spots in the English armor of tradition."—*Sir Philip Gibbs, N. Y. Times* **$3.50**

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Round about Parnassus

By WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT

WE are ashamed to say that we never read Professor John Livingston Lowes's *Convention and Revolt in Poetry* when it originally appeared in the high tide of the poetic renaissance in America just before America entered the World War. Houghton Mifflin has now published a new edition of it, into which we plunged the other evening, and found it fascinating reading. Indeed, we finished it at one sitting. Attestation of the fact that there was once so much hubbub about free verse and such merry warfare over poetry reads oddly now. And today the radicals in verse have gone much further than even Professor Lowes could foresee. He speaks of "communication," very sanely. But the latest dictum has been that the truly modern poet should scorn communication. Which seems to us purely and simply nonsense, but has been taken quite seriously by a certain group.

It is in the first part of the book that Professor Lowes pleases us most profoundly. He has the faculty for discussing the medieval in anything but a dry-as-dust fashion. He is a thorough scholar with a good deal of the poet in him and a lively and delicious sense of humor. The liberality of his mind is matched by his true instinct for beautiful writing. He is particularly good concerning those poets who do not "throw out the baby with the bath," but build upon the old and so transform it that it becomes

For ever warm and still to be enjoy'd,
For ever panting, and for ever young.

How admirable he is concerning Chaucer! With Professor Lowes, scholarship is an ardent adventure. He vivifies everything he touches; and his position in regard to the whole development of poetry is still eminently sound. Every beginning poet should read and digest his book.

This panegyric is unnecessary, but inasmuch as *Convention and Revolt* came as a new experience to us, who heard and indulged in much argument in what now seem the old days concerning what was then the greatest excitement in literature, we felt it obligatory to pay tribute.

Another remarkable work that we have never read, is Thomas Hardy's *The Dynasts;* and now we have it at home, from Macmillan, with all three parts included in one volume—a new edition of this drama of the Napoleonic Wars that is reserved for our first long quiet evening. Think of having reached our age and having not yet read *The Dynasts!* But must we go on with this confession? If we must, let us come out with a final admission. Neither have we yet compassed Professor Lowes's *The Road to Xanadu,* still another book that, from having merely dipped into it, we know to be highly necessary to us.

The Columbia University Press is responsible for an heroic edition of *John Milton,* the editorial board for this work being headed by Frank Allen Patterson as General Editor. The Preface begins by saying:

> It is a strange fact in the history of literature that no complete edition of the works of John Milton has hitherto appeared. The present edition prints all the poetry and prose considered by the editors to be genuine, together with translations of such of the works as were not originally written in English. In the final volume will appear certain doubtful pieces.

Lincoln Macveagh of the Dial Press is meanwhile bringing out *The Works and Life of Christopher Marlowe,* the General Editor of these volumes being R. H. Case. The latest includes "The Jew of Malta" and "The Massacre at Paris," edited by H. S. Bennett, M.A. "The Jew of Malta" is, of course, one of Marlowe's best plays, the opening soliloquy of Barabas being particularly impressive.

John Masefield's *Chaucer* (Macmillan), being the Leslie Stephen lecture spoken at Cambridge University on March 2nd last, is a thin brochure. It contains certain pithy observations, but it cannot approach Masefield's remarks on Shakespeare. The tone of it is tired. Masefield indulges in the beginning in several parodies to illustrate how various great poets, Homer, Dante, and Wordsworth, would treat the simple narrative theme of "The Rat was on the Mat and the Cat came in." It is all rather childish. We do not really think that these remarks on Chaucer were worth reprinting in book-form.

In the series of *The Dolphin Books,* issued by Chatto and Windus, Thomas McGreevy puts forth a study of *T. S. Eliot.* He has dedicated his book to Patrick Tuohy, the Irish painter, who died in New York last October. His monograph begins with a discussion of Eliot's present poetic sterility, which McGreevy believes to be only temporary. It ends with the commentator very cheerful in his belief that Eliot, having accomplished his spiritual travail, and learned to sit still for awhile, will blossom as the rose. We wonder.

To an American Mr. McGreevy is, naturally, rather irritating. His is not the English superiority; more the Continental brand. But without knowing anything about America at first hand he proceeds to discourse with unlimited confidence. After all, however, that is of no particular moment. Mr. Eliot is on the way to be saved, and that is what principally interests Mr. McGreevy. It rather tires us, by now. We still cherish a great fondness for "The Hippopotamus," and we do not find Mr. McGreevy's comments upon it quite intelligent. As for his comment upon the lines following the famous crying aloud of Agamemnon in another poem, he seems to us to miss the whole force and significance of the matter. We feel that he could have done a far more thorough job in interpreting "The Waste Land." All we get are a few tangential observations. The erratic nature of this essay is entertaining at times, but it does not add much to one's knowledge of Eliot. With certain impatiences of Mr. McGreevy's we are fairly in sympathy, but we mildly derogate his *ex cathedra* manner. Some day, perhaps, an absorbing book will be written about T. S. Eliot. The material seems to be there. Meanwhile, his contributions to literature, while genuine ones, have actually been but a succession of reticences. In that resides his fascination. He is so constantly misinterpreted. As he himself has said in *Thoughts after Lambeth* (*Criterion Miscellany* No. 30, Faber & Faber), "when I wrote a poem called *The Waste Land,* some of the more approving critics said that I had expressed the 'disillusionment of a generation,' which is nonsense. I may have expressed for them their own illusion of being disillusioned, but that did not form part of my intention."

In regard to Mr. Eliot's Christianity, Mr. McGreevy ventures to hope that he will now "sooner or later, give literary expression to the joy that, since he is a poet, he must have experienced on finding some of the spiritual riches he had been questing for. It is unthinkable that he should retain anything of Satanic melancholy now that he is, if not at Rome, at least at All Saints, Margaret Street." And, in the same *Criterion* pamphlet above quoted from, Mr. Eliot himself has this to say: "In the end it is the Christian who can have the more varied, refined and intense enjoyment of life; which time will demonstrate." If that be so, it has yet apparently to come to Mr. Eliot. There is more enjoyment of life in his earlier poetry than there has been since "The Waste Land." He seems to have no enjoyment of life at present to give us. It makes one long for the Elizabethans! Indeed, *Thoughts after Lambeth* is a strange enough document to come from one who has been hailed in America, by a number, as the greatest modern American poet. For Mr. Eliot is now quite definitely walled within the fold of Anglo-Catholicism. Well, in that case we can only hope that he may be able to produce such poetry of spiritual exhilaration as has been the especial dispensation of the Roman Catholic poets of all ages. Strangely interesting if that should come in time!

SAPLINGS. Third, Fourth, and Fifth Series. Pittsburgh, Pa.: Scholastic Publishing Company.

These books, of 1928, 1929, and 1930 are collections of verse, short stories, plays, and essays selected from manuscripts written by high school students in competition for annual scholastic awards, including the Witter Bynner Scholastic Poetry Prize. The general level of the work is creditable and there is a variety of good workmanship.

SONNET SINGING. By GEORGE MEASON WHICHER. Amherst, Mass.: The Bookmart.

Mr. Whicher is a veteran poet who has contributed to many magazines and whose modest Muse has a cultivated charm.

SHEEPS'S CLOTHING. By MARGARET E. HAUGHAWOUT. Pittsburg, Kansas: College Inn Book Store.

In spite of a good deal of ineptitude and commonplaceness there is a real person speaking in some of these verses.

THIS CAVALCADE. By DAVID WEISSMAN. Los Angeles, California: Primavera Press.

There is some knowledge of life but little poetry in this aggregation of free verse. It is, in general, pretty prosy.

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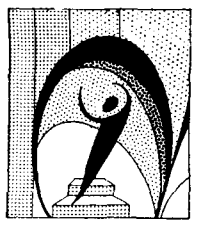

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Points of View

What We Want

To the Editor of *The Saturday Review:*
Sir:

I am not an intellectual. I should rather see than be one. They give me an acute pain. Why? Because as Andy Gump says, "The wise man is often in doubt; the fool is never."

For instance: I admire such *books* as Jeans, Eddington, Shapley, Michelson, Compton, Thompson (Aberdeen), Millikan, and really the most religious—if not pious—of them all, Einstein. Humble, noble, unsatisfied minds and spirits!

Then up pop the literati—Max Eastman, Mencken, the two Elmers, Langdon-Davies, and a million others who deny all consciousness save their own. I never heard of any of them creating time, space, motion, matter, mind, or a single emotion. Just grew.

To a "wayfaring man tho' a fool" it would seem that consciousness presupposes a greater consciousness—but not to those boys. They scrap among themselves, call each other's views absurd—see *Forum, The Bookman, Modern Quarterly;* and some of them believe, not in religion, but in *fairies* and an enlightened race of *crocodiles* soon to succeed mankind! Gosh!

One aspect of egotism appears in current book reviews. Your editorial "Reluctant Reviewers" hits the nail on the head. As a man of the street I like to read about new books, and I peruse all the leading Reviews—yours, of course, is the best. But often I "come out the self-same door that in I went."

Why? Because the majority of the reviewers use the space allowed to exhibit their personalities. It is easy and common to read a whole column or two and still not learn a darn thing about the book itself, or the author. The reviewer expatiates on his own personal view and make-up, just as did I on page 1 of this letter.

The authority of the Journal is what we want. Howard O'Brien, in today's Chicago *Post,* says a certain book may well receive the Pulitzer prize for real merit. According to Llewellyn Jones in the next column the same book must be gaucherie—crude, if not asinine.

Correct criticism is what we want—we don't give a whoop for the reviewer's ideas as a *feature,* but they are desirable, even necessary, as a side-dish, of course.

Chicago. GEORGE T. LITTLE.

Unsigned Critiques

To the Editor of *The Saturday Review:*
Sir:

Apropos your recent editorial on the subject of unsigned critiques:

Not only would there be less "whitewashing" and mutual back-slapping under such conditions, but it would also have a tendency to tone down such *ex cathedra* effusions as frequently appear from the pen of a critic who has more conceit than judicial-mindedness. Human nature takes upon itself rather odd turns now and then. Critics who have worked their way sufficiently into the public mind, frequently fool themselves with the idea that what *they* think tinctures the editorial policy of the publication for which they are writing. In other words—they are apt to say things for their own personal satisfaction, whether fair or not, which would most likely be unsaid if they were unsigned.

It may be a far cry, but any old-timer knows how far the general critic will go in the gratification of a strictly personal opinion, based on what he had for breakfast. Unsigned critiques would make for temperate utterances and rugged honesty at the same time, also a feeling of responsibility in not committing the *Review* to a criticism that was intemperate or sloppy. That, together with the knowledge that anything but hewing to the line would soon eliminate him from consideration.

If there's one publication that could get away with such a revolutionary and altogether desirable proceeding, it is the *Saturday Review,* and I'd like to see you try it on.

ROBERT FROTHINGHAM.

Mayfield, N. Y.

As to Compression

To the Editor of *The Saturday Review:*
Sir:

In "Compressed Masterpieces," in *The Saturday Review* of April 11, you express a belief that "certain masterpieces of the early romantic novel, notably Scott's and Cooper's, could be improved by a slight and judicious cutting of rambling description." This seems quite probable, particularly in the case of Cooper, the National Novelist Nobody Knows, whom, someone says, "we love, but we don't read." But unless Cooper is cut or condensed carefully, it seems better to take him as Hawkeye took his homebrew, —in a long draught. Then, at least, we shall not miss the prolixity which Mr. Brownell found to be an element of his illusion.

In the *Authors Digest,* edition of 1927, vol. V, p. 163, is the following "compression" of the famous fight on the caverned island at Glens Falls, in "The Last of the Mohicans": "All remained quiet in the strange retreat till the light of dawn came. Then suddenly the Iroquois stealing from all sides attacked furiously. But the superb marksmanship of the scout and the Mohicans kept the hostile savages at bay until nightfall, when all the powder was exhausted. While Bumpo and Chingachgook were consulting together, Cora Munro, the dark beauty, proposed that they should steal through the darkness to the fort and bring aid."

The main criticism on this is that it didn't happen that way in Cooper. All did *not* "remain quiet" on the island, the savages were *not* kept "at bay until nightfall," the powder was *not* "exhausted" but stolen, and there was no "darkness" to "steal through," although the swimming was good. Nothing, of course, is said of the single combats, or of the Indian marksman in the oak-tree.

In "One Hundred Best Novels Condensed," edited by Edwin A. Grozier, Harper, 1920 (?), is the following "condensation," by Thomas D. Connolly, of an earlier part of Cooper's "Mohicans."

"Hawkeye realized the serious plight of the little party and volunteered to help them. They set off up the river in a canoe bound for a cave where none but the scout and his Indian companions had ever set foot. This haven they reached in safety, *although pursued by a band of Indians as they crossed the lake.*"

In other words, Hawkeye's party, ascending the Hudson below Glens Falls, is pursued by Indians on Lake George. Neither the text of the "Mohicans," nor New York state geography, quite permits this. Cooper could be careless, too, but the condenser has here rather surpassed the romancer.

I do not know whether there are any further curiosities of compression in the works cited. Perhaps someone can furnish other, and quite different, examples of the "art of compression."

GEORGE L. BRADLEE.

Providence, R. I.

Errors Galore

To the Editor of *The Saturday Review:*
Sir:

A 555-page French translation of Professor Harry Elmer Barnes's volume "The Genesis of the World War" has just made its portly bow to the French public. In a eulogistic foreword which would have taught even Rudy Vallée some new adjectives Mr. Georges Demartial says that Professor Barnes stands first and foremost for American efficiency. He might have said "mass-production" or "sales effort" or some other of the qualities often ascribed to Americans: but he said "efficiency," so let us accept the dictum.

As I turned through the volume, my eye fell on a strange name in the index—"Théodore Roosewelt." I looked further. Then I counted. The index of this scientific work contains, at a hasty count, the names of sixty-three Americans and Englishmen. Of these sixty-three there are errors in the names of eighteen, roughly a third or a quarter.

One might expect to see Herrick mistreated as "Herryck," Sisley Huddleston disguised as "Sysley Huddelson," or the first section of Seton-Watson's name put down as "Seaton." But what a slight for so eminent a friend of Professor Barnes as Judge Frederick Bausman to go down to French posterity as "Frederik Bausmann," or for Edith Durham to be twisted to "Edith Durahm," or (unkindest of all) for Sidney Bradshaw Fay to be masqueraded as "Sydney Bradschau Fay." A STUDENT OF SOCIOLOGY.

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The New Books

The books listed by title only in the classified list below are noted here as received. Many of them will be reviewed later.

Art

SAIL HO! Windjammer Sketches Alow and Aloft. By *Gordon Grant*. New York: Payson. $5.

EMPIRE STATE. A Pictorial Record of Its Construction. New York: *William Edwin Rudge*. $15.

Belles Lettres

THE MEMOIRS OF GARIBALDI. Edited by *Alexandre Dumas*. Translated and with an Introduction by *R. S. Garnett*. Appleton.

CHAUCER. By *John Masefield*. Macmillan. $1.

SOME CRAFTIE ARTS. By *Jan Gordon*. London: Morley & Mitchell Kennerly, Jr. 5/6 net.

NO TROUBLE. By *Len Lye*. Deya, Majorca. 25 Shillings.

Biography

LIFE OF SAYAJI RAO III. Maharaja of Baroda. 2 vols. By *Stanley Rice*. New York: Oxford Press.

NOGUCHI. By *Gustav Eckstein*. Harper. $5.

GLIMPSES OF HIGH POLITICS. The Autobiography of *N. U. Tcharykow*. Macmillan. $5.

KING OF FASHION. The Autobiography of *Paul Poiret*. Philadelphia: Lippincott. $3.

DAWN. By *Theodore Dreiser*. Liveright. $5.

THE LIFE OF JIM BAKER, 1818-1898. *By Nolie Mumey*. Denver, Colo.: The World Press, Inc.

JAMES FENIMORE COOPER. By *Henry Walcott Boynton*. Century. $5.

Classics

GOD IN GREEK PHILOSOPHY TO THE TIME OF SOCRATES. By *Roy Kenneth Hack*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Drama

PLAYS OF THE RESTORATION AND EIGHTEENTH CENTURY, As They Were Acted at the Theatres-Royal. Edited by DUGALD MACMILLAN and HOWARD MUMFORD JONES. New York: Holt.

A useful collection of plays, some of them still well known, others though famous in their day not so familiar. The plays have been chosen as representations of the temper of their respective periods.

THE COMPLETE PLAYS OF RICHARD BRINSLEY SHERIDAN. London and Glasgow: Collins' Clear-Type Press.

FOURTEEN NOTES. By *Edward Gordon Craig*. Seattle: University of Washington Bookstore. $3.50.

BRASS ANKLE. By *DuBose Heyward*. Farrar & Rinehart. $2.

THE INSPECTOR-GENERAL. By *Nikolai Gogol*. Acting Version by *John Anderson*. New York: Samuel French. $1.50.

GEORGE WASHINGTON PLAYS. Selected by *A. P. Sanford*. Dodd, Mead. $2.50.

ATAHUALPA, THE LAST OF THE INCAS. By *Alfred Antoine Furman*. New York: Lathrop C. Harper, 8 West 40th St. $2.50.

AMATEUR ACTING AND PLAY PRODUCTION. By *Wayne Campbell*. Macmillan. $3.50.

A HISTORY OF EARLY NINETEENTH CENTURY DRAMA. By *Allardyce Nicoll*. Macmillan. 2 vols. $11.

Fiction

BINNY'S WOMEN. By GLADYS KNIGHT. New York: The Century Co. 1931. $2.

Binny's women were his daughter and her stepmother, and a more trying menage for a gentle little man it would be hard to imagine. Binn McElroy and his daughter Joel are white trash in New Orleans. His social status does not bother Binn, but he is ambitious for Joel who resents her own lack of good breeding and the possession of it by others. She has two friends only, who are in some unaccountable way able to put up with her. She and her father adore each other, and Binn's marriage to Georgia, who is several pegs above him socially, precipitates trouble. Joel is jealous, undisciplined, and thoroughly disagreeable. Between her and Georgia there are no pretenses, just a good, wholesome hate of which Binn is unconscious. Joel's loyalty to her father and the tragedy of her isolation are the redeeming features of the novel. The plot is thin and not especially convincing; the other characters go through their parts in connection with the plot, and that is about all. But Joel is real and stands out from her background like a living actor in a puppet show.

As a first novel, "Binny's Women" shows a certain amount of promise. Miss Knight writes crudely, but without flourishes, and she points her scenes like a dramatist. They are often effective without reality; only when Joel is present on the page does the reader forget his irritation with the trivial story and the mechanical characterizations. But after all it is something to have created one character out of a welter!

FOR A SONG. By KONRAD BERCOVICI. New York: Dodd, Mead & Co. 1931. $2.50.

This is the magazine type of novel, a punch in every chapter, totally unrelated characters springing into being in each installment, plots and counterplots that never quite succeed in getting together by the end. But by that time you have forgotten the beginning, so it's all right. There is a smattering of Metropolitan Opera House jealousies, of Mulberry Street feuds, an Italian music-student *pension* in Milan. Prima donnas, impresarios, golden-voiced tenors, usurers, fake art dealers, all push elbows and speak in dialects. The boy lover is sentenced to death after a bootleggers' brawl, the heroine loses her voice when her family feud is ended, the Irish junk dealer commits suicide in the Wall Street crash, a miserly Jew drops dead when he finds he has been swindled. The attempt to be highly dramatic fails by its own obviousness. One cannot get excited over puppets, especially when the strings that pull them get all mixed up.

THE DOGS. By IVAN NAZHIVEN. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott. 1931. $2.50.

The real protagonists of this lively and moving story of Russia before and during the Revolution are dogs whose lives parallel and overlap the lives of nobles and peasants. They observe life, and the dog's-eye point of view is pungent and illuminating. The central figure of the novel is Siedoi, a dog of the people, a hardy, adventurous, amorous fellow whose lowly ancestry sharpens his native wit and helps preserve him through the most perilous of exploits. Then there are the high-born Borzois, belonging to the Prince. Their lives are colored by the perfection of their breeding, the suavity of their surroundings and by the personality of a kind but inflexible master. They, like the Prince, pay the price of aristocracy in the final debacle. Don't make the mistake of thinking that this is a book for those who "like dogs and children." These dogs of red Russia are not puppies. They are adult persons; vain, ambitious, emotional, lusty, loyal, and craven. So are the human beings. One reads the book through without a conscious differentiation between dogs and men. Siedoi's messages to his fellows, boastful or conciliatory, left wherever convenient, were as real as much diplomatic correspondence. The Prince and his daughter are tragic figures in this essentially tragic story. They are gentle, sensitive, and intelligent, and their fate is as undeserved as was the dreadful fate of the dog Gromilo at the hands of an exalted member of their class.

Mr. Nazhivin has not tried to make his analogy between dogs and men too perfect. He has not put man-thoughts into dog-minds, and he leaves the reader to draw his own conclusions as to the less sapient moments of man.

The novel is built slowly up to its climax, from a peaceful country idyll to a frenzy of destruction and revenge.

THE CALENDAR. By EDGAR WALLACE. New York: Doubleday, Doran & Co. 1931. $1.

Mr. Wallace's latest (as we go to press) is a racing romance with just a touch of the author's stock ingredient of mystery: the story of a British gentleman who almost goes wrong. At one point in the narrative Garry Anson is about to be "warned off" Newmarket Heath and all other courses under the jurisdiction of the Jockey Club because of an incriminating note he has written to a lady, warning her not to back his horse in the Ascot Stakes. To be "warned off," Mr. Wallace permits us to gather, is for an English racing gentleman practical extinction, involving resignation from all his clubs and the cut direct from his old friends.

Mr. Wallace buids up a complicated situation with no loss of time or space at the beginning of his book; indeed, his workmanlike economy in his opening chapters forced this reader repeatedly to turn back to find out which character the author was talking about. But once the foundations are in, the story marches along smoothly and intelligibly enough, with plenty of excitement. Mr. Wallace knows the racing business pretty thoroughly, as he has been a tipster for a London paper for years, but sometimes he makes this story a little hard for a reader who doesn't understand odds and such. The "calendar" of the title, by the way, is an English turf paper, "The Racing Calendar."

TO THE VICTOR. By HENRY VON RHAU. Longmans, Green. 1931. $2.

In this wild adventure novel there are recounted the prodigious feats of strength, heroism, self-sacrifice, and sagacity compassed by the herculean Baron von Ulm, captain of the Pomeranian Grenadiers, after he has fled his own country a fugitive, served as mate on an African coast tramp steamer, as a famous soldier of the Foreign Legion fighting in Algeria during the war, and finally as Colonel of his redoubtable Grenadiers in the last days of Armageddon. The tale is rather preposterous and high-flown, but it has a faculty of holding one enrapt in the swiftly unfolded narrative which should commend it to the reader whose primary demand in fiction is continuous violent action.

THE ADVENTURE OF HAWKE TRAVIS. By *Eli Colter*. Macmillan. $2.

AMELIA. By *Henry Fielding* (Everyman's Library). Vol. II. Dutton. 90 cents.

Miscellaneous

CRIMES OF THE YEAR. By JOSEPH GOLLOMB. New York: Horace Liveright. 1931. $2.50.

A dark and bloody book is this, with its careful recitation of ten individual murder cases and three chapters on wholesale murder. The crimes recounted are gathered from many nations. The motives run from simple greed to clandestine love.

Here we find the weird and enthralling tale of the women in two Hungarian villages who so calmly poisoned their husbands and infants for twenty years. Also the psychological reasons behind such callous slaughter.

Three of the crimes related occurred in England and in each instance was the murderer convicted and hanged on circumstantial evidence, which stories leave the suggestion that the wrong man may have been executed in each case.

Squat and stolid Irene Shrader, "The drudge who turned bandit," has been fully dealt with in a manner more understanding than that displayed by the public prints at the time of the crime. In the murder of Isadore Fink, obscure and harmless Harlem laundryman, is a crackerjack mystery which can't be solved. Two stories, one from Vienna and the other from Texas, are first-rate tales of fact told in simple fashion, but with the suspense, false clues, and shrewd work handled so that they are good detective yarns.

The longest, and perhaps best, tale in the book is an exhaustive but succinct account of the history of "Bloody Williamson" county, the scene of the Herrin disorders and the colorful career of Charlie Birger, the undersized Jew who became a terror to Southern Illinois. This is a painstaking and comprehensive story.

Also there is a chapter on Chicago's crimes, including the St. Valentine's day massacre and the murder of Jake Lingle. In this there is not much new. The author has also fallen into a few errors, one being his reference to Big Bill Thompson as a Harvard graduate.

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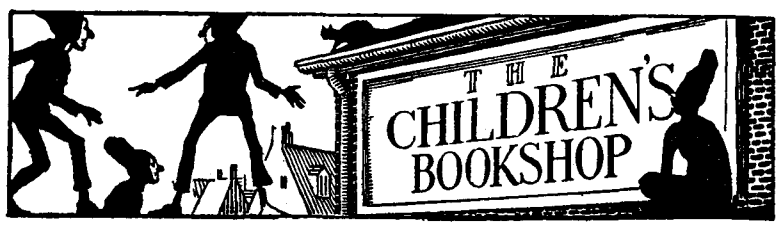

Conducted by MARION PONSONBY

Runaway Fountain

By WINIFRED WELLES

The fountain chased me down the street.
I heard a rush of mischievous feet,
I felt a breath against my ear.
Strangely I thought, if I turn here,
What creature will be prancing near?
With pointed hoof and pricking ear,
All crystal-eyed and silver-skinned,
His white mane tossing in the wind?
I turned, but nothing glittered there,
Only the fountain in the Square
Galloped against the gusty air.

Reviews

SPICE AND THE DEVIL'S CAVE. By AGNES DANFORTH HEWES. Decorated by LYND WARD. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 1930. $2.50.

Reviewed by ANNE HUME VANCE

IN his introduction to Mrs. Hewes's fine historical romance, Curtis Howe Walker, himself an historian, sets forth as her theme that "maritime trade, inspiring youth, has played an undreamed-of role in world civilization." In "Swords on the Sea," Mrs. Hewes's book of last year, it was rivalry for trade supremacy between Venice and Genoa in the fourteenth century that sets the woof for the tale, and in "Spice and the Devil's Cave" we recognize a similar pattern.

The Jew Zakuto, financier and friend of navigators, poring over his maps in his Lisbon workshop, tells an eager young disciple, "It was Polo's account of the traffic of the East that started Christopher Columbus to thinking about a water shortcut to it—and now all Europe is hot on the scent of a passage to India." All Europe indeed! Spain outfitting Columbus for a third voyage, Henry of England determined that John Cabot shall be the first to find the sea-route to India, Venice and Genoa bringing back the goods of the Orient by way of the Mediterranean, their jealous eyes on other nations to see what they will do to open up the Way of the Spices by sea. Only Portugal, it seems, is out of the race, because of the indifference of her king; no longer the Portugal of Prince Henry, the Great Navigator, who broke down the medieval superstition of a habitable world caught between a wall of ice to the north and a wall of flame to the south. Nor is this the Portugal of Bartholomew Diaz's best days. Ten years have gone since he all but found the way. Now, as our story begins, there is unknown to navigators only whatever may be of sea or land between Diaz's last pillars, and Sofala, where Pedro de Covilham left off on his journey down the east coast of Africa. "Why do you care so much for the little bit between Sofala and the Devil's Cave? What of it?" asks the Arab girl who in a dramatic scene tells an astounded audience what she knows of the Way of the Spices. Why they care so much, and how the fiery patriotism of a few gathered together in the Jew Zakuto's workshop penetrates, through the medium of a court astrologer, break the apathy of the king, is the main burden of the story.

Mrs. Hewes has vitalized her historic characters as she has those of her own creation. Our feelings are definitely involved when Diaz, hero and veteran, must take second place, the king's choice for Captain-Major of his expedition falling upon the younger man, Vasco da Gama; when seventeen-year-old Ferdinand Magellan, with thoughts on the far places of the earth, frets in true youthful fashion under the petty duties of a king's page; and when the dreams and high idealism of the Jew Zakuto and the devotion of Ruth, his practical wife, involve them in enterprises greater than the kingdom from which they are driven by fanaticism. If Scander and Nicolo Conti, estimable as they are in their desire to aid a noble cause and to protect beauty and virtue in distress, are a bit too gullible for men accustomed to the intrigues of the times, we are not greatly disturbed thereby. There is a thorough-going villian, captain of the private ship *Sultana*, who is very properly named Abdul, and an accomplice who, not knowing the depths of his master's villainy, escapes the worst fate at the hands of his captors. Last, but important to the story and to the finding of the way, is Nejmi, Arab girl of mystery.

At all points where her story touches da Gama's expedition, Mrs. Hewes follows very closely, it would seem, the authentic narrative written by the chronicler who accompanied the real expedition in person in 1497. The old chronicle makes much, as does she, of da Gama's vow not to return with his life in his body "without bringing some certain information" of that which the king desired. And the many references to the "Jew Zakuto" in this contemporary account prove that his name is historical and that he plays an important part in the great undertaking: "Vasco da Gama before going out to Lisbon while conversing alone with the Jew Zacuto had received from him much information as to what he should do during his voyage."

More books like "Spice and the Devil's Cave" and there would no longer be the query, What is there for our high school boys and girls to read? For us others, Mrs. Hewes's romances stretch the imagination like a rubber band, for she starts us to researching on our own. I wish she might keep us at this delightful game. Perhaps she knows the Orient best, but with her scholar's mind and her tongue for a tale she could give us, if she chose, stories of Hanseatic cities and the Amber Route.

Lynd Ward has contributed original illustrations reminiscent of Howard Pyles's graphic and decorative quality. A brilliant jacket, a sailing ship ploughing through boiling seas into a tropic sun, and end-papers that carry an outline map of Africa and da Gama's route to the east, add to the general attractiveness of a book that will give pleasure to many readers.

A BOY SCOUT WITH THE SEA DEVIL. By DAVID R. MARTIN, JR. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons. 1931. $1.75.

Reviewed by WILLIAM MCFEE

"TO go to Trinidad and not see Pitch Lake," declares Master Martin, "is one of those unpardonable sins that can never be expiated." From which we learn that Scout Law does not insist upon good grammar or the use of short and simple words. Neither, for that matter, does Count Luckner. His introduction is an amusing and confusing farrago of breezy nonsense and stereotyped sentiment. Nowhere does he mention that his voyage to the West Indies with a group of Boy Scouts was a commercial enterprise. The Count makes much, almost too much, of "romance" in going to sea. It cannot be too emphatically stated, for the benefit of parents as well as Scouts, that ships go to sea to make money, just as trucks go along the roads. They did this in Elizabethan times, and will always do so. Count Luckner is an interesting personality, and his exploits in the war, to judge from the medals he wears, seem to have been adequately recognized. But if he is going to bamboozle American boys with the ridiculous notion that going to sea is any more romantic than driving a truck or joining the army, he lays himself open to criticism. What the American Merchant Marine needs is a body of men who go to sea because they like the life in spite of its economic drawbacks and social obscurity. The particular curse at this time is the one-trip sailor, a type which afflicts every ship owner during the summer months. Active encouragement should be given American boys to go to sea. It is a good life and better than many white collar jobs. But what is the matter with shipping on a regular voyage and signing on for an apprenticeship which will open the way to ultimate command? These Boy Scouts whom Count Luckner took on a pleasure cruise to the West Indies are the very stuff the Merchant Marine requires for future officers.

Dave Martin's literary style, as he tells us of the events of the cruise, is terrible. He reports visiting William Beebe's laboratory in the West nIdies, and professes an admiration for that scientist's writings. It is to be feared that Dave belongs to the Martin Johnson school of literature rather than Beebe's. Association with the Martin Johnsons on a trip to Africa has had its inevitable effect on Dave Martin. However, it is a style that is very current among the contributors to college newspapers and will no doubt go big with Dave's admiring boy public. At that, it is better than the Count's, who has a tendency, when his syntax is hopelessly involved, to take refuge in his familiar "By Joe." Occasionally the adult reader wishes the Count would break away and give us a real expletive in the original nautical manner, just to vary the monotony. But the Count is not only nautical, he is nice.

SWALLOWS AND AMAZONS. By ARTHUR RANSOME. Philadelphia: Lippincott. 1931. $2.

Reviewed by T. MORRIS LONGSTRETH

IT is easily imaginable that "Swallows and Amazons" attained its special quality of happiness in its author's mind when, as correspondent to the *London Daily News* and the *Manchester Guardian*, he was living through the tragedies of the Front or exploring the chaos of revolutionary Russia. For here is everything that the Front was not and that Russia is not—peace, innocence, family life at its loveliest, laughter and security.

The story is plotted so slightly that the American boy, reared on "westerns," may turn up his nose at such a low-pitched tale. It will be his loss. Four children go camping on an island in one of the English lakes. Two rival campers—girls, at that—appear, and joyfully agree on war.

But Mr. Ransome has marshalled many aides. First, a reality of scene. As in Defoe, no detail is too insignificant to gloss over, yet the itemizing never grows wearisome, and a store of handy things to know about sailing is secreted in the pages. Second, a reality of characters. They are born alive and do not have to be described.

"Swallows and Amazons" will gain by being read aloud. The child who hears will live gaily, whether on Wild Cat Island or in Octopus Lagoon, while the parent who reads will remember idyllic hours. For this book is both silvery present and golden retrospect. All that is tedious and sullen and deceptive vanishes in its sunniness as clouds vanish in the tempered air of a summer day. The reader has only one dread—that some quarrel, some calamity may mar the course of things, inasmuch as they are so human. But the spell lasts. And we think that the book will last, too, from edition unto edition.

TALES FROM NORSE MYTHOLOGY. Retold and illustrated by KATHERINE PYLE. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co. 1930. $3.

THERE WAS MAGIC IN THOSE DAYS. By NORREYS JEPHSON O'CONOR. Illustrated by J. GOWER PARKS. New York: Frederick A. Stokes. 1930. $2.

Reviewed by ELEANOR SHANE

MISS PYLE has added another volume to her long list of favorites with children. It is always a question when a new rendering of old tales comes upon the market, as to whether it is needed; whether it adds color to its field or merely clutters it. With Padraic Colum's fairly recent and very satisfactory "Children of Odin" and only three older standbys, the field of Norse mythology for children is in no danger of being over-crowded. For reasons obvious enough the Norse stories have never played as important a part in our literature as have the Greek. Miss Pyle has done us good service in bringing these stories once more to our attention, and we think she has done it delightfully

This will be one of the "display" books of the year; large, with heavy paper, wide margins, clear, well-leaded type, eight illustrations in color by the author, and fitting end papers done by Walter Pyle, Jr. For us the illustrations catch the spirit well of these vigorous, rather fierce and very colorful explanations of the beginnings of all things, but they might have been far more striking on a better grade of paper. This criticism holds for every physical aspect of the book, which just misses being a distinctive production by the use of not quite the best materials.

Those who have adapted Norse mythology to children's use vary considerably in their selection of material. Miss Pyle has begun at what will seem to any child a sensible starting point—the very beginning of life. With an admirable choice of stories she takes us through the days of these half-mortal gods and their age-long enemies, the frost-giants, to a natural ending, Ragnarok, the twilight of the Gods, and the end of the old order. Briefly she adds a cheerful suggestion of new worlds and

(*Continued on page* 823)

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Auctions

Charles F. Heartman, Metuchen, N. J. May 2nd: Americana. According to the catalogue preface, this sale ends Mr. Heartman's auction season. "The present season," he writes, "was in many ways one of the hardest the trade ever had to go through. With prices being slashed right and left, the buying power of collectors curtailed, and books and autographs on the shelves acquired at higher prices, booksellers had a hard time. . . . There is little doubt that the crucial test in a world-wide depression has passed and we are on the mend. If we are sane, we look only for a slow and gradual improvement. But the mere fact that this improvement is on the way will do much to create a better feeling. Once this movement is perceptible, prices will mount again." For persons without Mr. Heartman's optimism it is a relief to believe that the era of foolish and ridiculously high prices has ended: no one but a dealer himself is to blame for "books and autographs on his shelves acquired at higher prices than collectors are willing, or able, to give. At one time, there seemed to exist an impression, carefully fostered by writers on the subject of rare books, that it was necessary merely to say emphatically a particular volume was unusually scarce—collectors, like eager gold-fish, were supposed simply to be waiting to snap up, at any cost, whatever they could find. Rare books will always be the same, but such rarity ought to be in proportion to importance, or interest, not determined by an over-enthusiastic book-dealer.

American Art Association, Anderson Galleries. May 6th: Collections from the library of the late William P. Clyde, of New York City, together with autograph letters, historical manuscripts, first editions, and standard sets, sold by order of private owners and estates. The American historical section of this sale includes: an original autograph manuscript orderly book, written during the siege of Boston and the defence of New York, showing a number of court-martials; the autograph manuscript history of the Indians of New England, by Major Daniel Gookin; a presentation copy of the Lincoln-Douglas debates from President Lincoln; a group of about 100 autograph letters and manuscripts written by Jedidiah Morse; a collection of autographic and printed material relating to the founding of Washington; several manuscript poems by James Stephens; a presentation copy from George Cruikshank of the first edition of "Illustrations of Time"; and a copy of Shaw's first book, "Cashel Byron's Profession."

The Rosenbach Company of New York in issuing its "Catalogue of an Exhibition of Memorable Documents in American History, from Columbus to Hoover," has done a fine piece of work. "We have attempted in this exhibition," the preface begins, "to show a series of original documents that record, step by step, the history of America. You may inquire why are not such precious things locked up in national or state archives, to be safely preserved for all time for the use and delight of this and future generations? The answer is not far to seek. The Government of the United States and the States themselves have never made strenuous efforts to gather historic material relating to this country. "On account of lack of funds" (the curse of all great libraries, and one of the commonest phrases in the vocabulary of any librarian) "the various officials of the great libraries, however enthusiastic and anxious they might be, could not take advantage of the opportunities when offered. While appropriations have been made by Congress, in the past, of millions of dollars for all kinds of projects, comparatively little has been spent to secure the great historic documents that are milestones in our country's history. As custodians, for the time being, of these great relics which we ourselves have gathered, we are displaying them for a brief period, so that those who care may see and enjoy them." The exhibition is one of the most astonishing that can be imagined: Caesar Rodney's letter, dated 4 July, 1776, giving an account of the Declaration of Independence; a letter signed by Button Gwinnett, John Hancock, Robert Morris, Francis Lewis, George Read, and Arthur Middleton; John Paul Jones writing to Robert Morris about the presentation of a sword to him by Louis XVI; Abraham Lincoln's personal copy of his Debates with Stephen A. Douglas; General Robert E. Lee's official letter resigning his commission in the Army of the United States; and the original manuscript of Lincoln's first draft of the Emancipation Proclamation. How any one can read this catalogue without marvelling at the stupidity that has permitted such material to get away from the Library of Congress—or from museums of American history—is impossible to conceive. It is a collection of such enormous importance not only to sentimentalists but to historians in general that it ought always to be kept together—there can be nothing else like it in this country.

G. M. T.

Aphrodite in Good Form

APHRODITE IN AULIS. By GEORGE MOORE. Trade edition. New York: Brentano's. 1931. $2.50.

A FEW weeks ago I made mention of a poorly printed "edition-de-Luxe" of George Moore's "Aphrodite in Aulis." It was necessary to condemn that edition as deficient in all the essentials of good book making. It is therefore with much pleasure that I have received the trade edition of the same story, and find it admirable in every way. As a piece of book making it is superior to the limited edition; as a book to read it is in every way admirable—one can hold it comfortably and read it easily; and on the score of price it is fair and reasonable.

In size the book is a small octavo, printed on laid paper of good weight and finish, in Fournier type, well leaded. It has a satisfactory title-page by Howard Simon, and the typography is by Ronald Freelander. The binding is in natural color linen, with a decorative line drawing of Aphrodite on the cover.

I suggest that an interesting comparison may be made between the two editions, with the odds all in favor of the trade book.

R.

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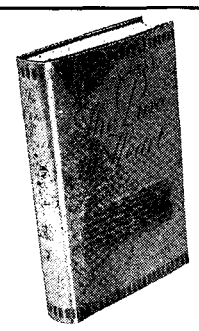

To-day *The Inner Sanctum* goes to Vienna, and Vienna comes to *The Inner Sanctum*.

The roving half of the firm departs for the city of SCHNITZLER, SALTEN, and WERFEL on the very day which marks the publication of FRANZ WERFEL'S new novel, *The Pure In Heart*.

Even if *The Pure In Heart* had not been chosen as the May selection of The Book League of America, even if it had not been hailed by the united voice of Europe as a novel of major significance, this would still be a work deeply lodged in the affection and homage of your correspondents.

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For the most interesting critical appreciation of *The Pure In Heart*—typewritten on one side of the paper, and not exceeding 200 words—received by *The Inner Sanctum* of SIMON AND SCHUSTER, 386 Fourth Avenue, New York, on or before May 21, 1931, your correspondents will award a prize consisting of ten copies of the book plus copies of his two earlier works *Verdi—A Novel of the Opera* and *Class Reunion*.

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THE firm of Horace Liveright, Inc., is now installed in new quarters at the Bond Building, 29 West 47th Street, where it occupies the seventh and eighth floors. The Radio City has taken over the old haunts of *Dreiser, O'Neill, Gertrude Atherton, Sherwood Anderson, E. E. Cummings*, et al. . . .

Sometime ago *Eugenia M. Frost's* admonition to us to cease mentioning our "alcoholic life" in public plunged us into a fit of depression, and since then, you will probably be willing to admit, we have done very little about it. About three days after our birthday, last February, we received what follows from a true pal, one *Dalnar Devening* of San Bernardino, California. We think it's an awfully good "pome," so we're going to print it. After all, it doesn't come under the head of our talking about ourself!

BEERYOPAGITICA

Is it verboten? Oh, my soul and body!
Can't a poor Phœnix, as thirsty as ashes,
Down a hot toddy
And make the commotion
That mankind calls speech
And monkeys name chatter?
What does it matter
To any or each
If a gentleman's tongue gets as loose as the ocean
Slopping about on the beach?
Tell us about it, now there's a good feller;
Drive us to drink—we've a sort of a cellar.
Name all your poisons. If thirsty they make us
We've got the potable goods that can slake us.
Let him pour toddies like ten Irrawaddies
Mighty at flood,
Then let him speak till his tumult abashes
All in ear reach.
How his tongue lashes
While metaphors scatter
Like shreds of the scud
When winter's wind dashes,
A horse that no cowboy can tame!
Pour in the port and the heady Canary,
Madeira, Rhinewine, and the bubbling, airy,
Joyous, insane,
Head-splitting champagne.
And be not too wary of hearty old sherry,
And cognac, too,
And other strong brew.
Drink a cocktail, that flame
With its flaming red cherry!
Boy! Whiskey for frisky conductors of features.
Heads of departments, those finicking creatures,
Need the best bourbon a label can lie about.
Sometimes one drink will make a man die about.
Give him gin, old square shoulder,
That makes all men bolder,
And older. Ah, older!
Bring him beer by the keg
And Scotch by the pannikin.
Can he down the last dreg?
If he's a real man he kin.
All the drinks ever devised by mad man
Bring him in bottle and barrel and can.
Drink 'em down, Phœnix,
Yea, drain 'em completely.
That rhyme is too mean? Nix,
We've hurdled it featly.
Drink 'em down quickly,
Right down to the lees.
You'll talk a bit thickly,
But talk as you please!

We thank *Emma K. Parrish*, of Western Springs, Illinois, for reminding us that the "Threnos" from Shakespeare's "The Phœnix and the Turtle" enunciated:

Death is now the Phœnix nest;
And the turtle's loyal breast
To eternity doth rest.

Miss Daphne du Maurier, daughter of the actor, *Gerald du Maurier*, and granddaughter of *George du Maurier*, who wrote "Trilby" and "Peter Ibbetson," is the author of a novel, "The Loving Spirit," which Doubleday, Doran is publishing in July. *Rebecca West, Robert Lynd, Gerald Gould*, and other English critics have praised it. . . .

Our friend *Homer M. Parsons*, out in San Bernardino, has been doing a libretto, "Westward Ho! Ho!" for a comic opera, the world première of which was or is just about now, out on the Coast. We wish we could be present! One great burst of song is where the hero of the piece, a subdivider, falls for one Susan Hopper, the Miss I-oway of a bathing beauty contest. . . .

From "Living Authors," a book of biographies edited by "*Dilly Tante*," and to be published by the H. W. Wilson Company on May twelfth, we cull the following remarks of authors concerning themselves: *Max Beerbohm*, "My gifts are small. I've used them very well and discreetly, never straining them, and the result is that I've made a charming little reputation." *Norman Douglas*, "Haven't made five hundred pounds by this damned writing you talk so much about since I first began it." *Robinson Jeffers*, "My discarded amusements are long-distance running, wrestling, alcoholism, caneoing." *Llewelyn Powys*, "Both I and Theodore have originality; John Cowper has genius." *Osbert Sitwell*, "I am most fond of talking and thinking; that is to say, talking first and thinking afterwards." *Gertrude Stein*, "I am working for what will endure, not for a public. Once you have a public you are never free." . . .

A book that fathers should read is "Your Son and Mine" by *John T. McGovern* (Stokes) which will be published on the seventh of this month. It bears a foreword by *Franklin P. Adams* and a preface by *Dr. Howard J. Savage*. It is a mighty sensible book that "Terry" McGovern has written. It concerns the dangers of giving your boy the wrong start in life, the wrong kind of education. It is in the form of a series of imaginary biographies founded on fact. McGovern knows what he is talking about. At present he is Staff Director of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. . . .

And so. . . .

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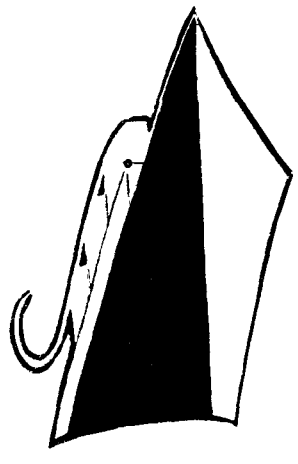

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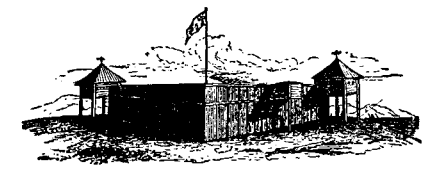

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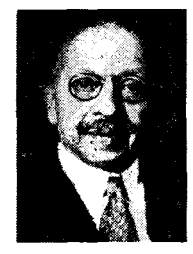

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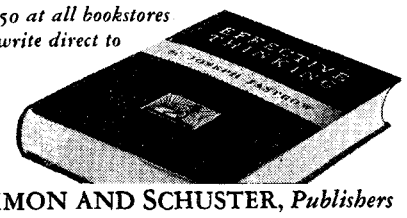

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The Reader's Guide

By MAY LAMBERTON BECKER

Inquiries in regard to the selection of books and questions of like nature should be addressed to MRS. BECKER, c/o *The Saturday Review*

THE Okeefinokee verses have come sailing home. The first copy came from Edmund Pearson, who says they are from "Sketches and Scraps," by Laura E. Richards. "This," he says, "is the book which also contains the rhyme of the seven little tigers who sat them in a row, Their seven little dinners for to eat, also The tale of the little Cossack Who lived by the River Don, He sat on a sea-green hassock, And his grandfather's name was John. Also the rhyme of Ponsonby Perks, Who fought with the Turks, Performing many wonderful works. And if A. Edward Newton, Dr. Rosenbach, and Christopher Morley came to me on their bended knees offering me in exchange for my copy of this book: a first edition of the Hypneroterrachia, or any other jawcracker; three Gutenberg Bibles; and six complete autographed sets of the complete works of Joseph Conrad; I would laugh 'em all to scorn, I would."

Anne Eaton, librarian of the famous Lincoln School of this city, said "Sketches and Scraps" was published by Estes and Lauriat. "It has other, and, to my mind, even rarer gems in it, such as 'The Seven Little Tigers and the Aged Cook,' and 'Skinny Mrs. Pipkin and Fat Mrs. Wobblechin'—who couldn't agree about the window and still come to my mind whenever there is a disagreement about the temperature of a room. There was the ingenious and philosophical Winifred White who married a fright, but 'the back of his head was so lovely, she said, it dazzled her soul and enraptured her sight.' As for the illustrations—I still feel they have never been surpassed." She is coming to tea, bringing the book along. *L. F. C., Massachusetts,* sends a copy (there are nine stanzas, so I regretfully refrain from putting the poem once more into circulation through this column), and *K. R. R., Cornwall-on-Hudson, N. Y.,* who sends another, says the book in which she found it was Laura E. Richard's "In My Nursery," adding that I might very well have read it in *St. Nicholas,* as she remembers that many of Mrs. Richards's verses were printed there. So they were, to the extent of some two columns of fine-print titles in the General Index, but the frog poem is not there. This Index, by the way, is part of the contents of a bookcase whose mention will rouse hopeless envy in many a middle-aged heart; it contains bound volumes with red and gold backs from the beginning to the present day. My mornings are spent eight inches away from this bookcase, and if it is moved further off in the new offices there will be an awful howl from the literary editor. I have re-read all of "Phaeton Rogers" already.

By the time this gets into print more letters will have been received, for which I thank the senders in advance; the episode strengthens my already firm faith that the sort of verse best loved and longest remembered in youth is the jingle with strongly marked rhythm and nonsense quality—narrative with a decided flavor of the absurd. Besides letters, almost everyone reasonably middle-aged whom I have met since this call was printed has taken pains to recite to me, at length and without the least verbal inaccuracy, some nonsense rhyme beloved in youth and usually learned either from *St. Nicholas* or *Harper's Young People.* Why have we let this type of verse sink into comparative desuetude? When Arthur Guiterman writes it we love it, but who else writes it? As Hashimuro Togo used to say, I ask to know.

I did not fare so well with the Tobago verse. Several readers, the first being *M. B., Philadelphia,* sent me the rhyme, but what the inquirer was after was light on its origin, apparently somewhere in the dim backward and abyss of time.

M. B., living for a year in Paris, is to spend the Christmas holidays in London. H. G. H., New York, is to spend several months in England, and asks for leisurely books of travel, especially concerned with the countryside in the South.

THE book that comes nearest to the essential spirit of a London Christmas at the present time was written nearly a hundred years ago, for it was in 1844 that Charles Dickens wrote to Professor Felton that he had just "laughed, wept, and wept again, and excited himself in a most extraordinary manner" in the composition of "A Christmas Carol," "thinking whereof he walked about the black streets of London, fifteen and twenty miles, many a night when all the sober folks had gone to bed." Notice its food-shops as well as its more celebrated dinner, for traditional food, bought almost by ritual and eaten where love is, counts for more in an English Christmas than it does in ours, where an orgy of unwrapping presents brings us tired and a trifle let-down to the Christmas table. If the Dickens picture seem too sweet Christmas in Priestley's "Angel Pavement" (Harper) is just as accurate and a trifle subacid being the same shops and shopping seen through the eyes of a young woman with neither money nor family to fit.

For the English countryside, a new book called "The English Scene" (Macmillan) shows and describes and places in social history lovely and often unconsidered features such as windmills and watermills, pounds and tithe barns, almshouses—what traveller does not recall some such place of peace where he told himself he must somehow qualify to end his days? It speaks too of dovecotes, and that reminds me—because there is one of vast antiquity on the grounds of the Findlater sisters at Rye, giving their place the name of The Roundel Gate—that I made the inexcusable error of saying that "The Green Graves of Balgowrie" was written by Mary Findlater, when it was really by her sister Jane. *A. C. B.* writes, "Oh, Mrs. Becker, how could you!" and thinks Mary will feel dreadfully to be given credit belonging to her sister, her own best work having been "The Rose of Joy." But somehow I don't think either will really mind: they will know—for I know they read this review every week and buy their American books by it—that I had made of the two a beautiful blended memory, and indeed I defy anyone not to mix them up who has heard them tell how they collaborate in writing. I think their souls have learned the art of blending. Nora Archibald Smith called my attention to the slip, but she said they would not mind; they are so beautifully one. It gives me a chance to say again that there is a pensive charm about "The Green Graves of Balgowrie" that will keep it green for many more years.

For an introductory book for England I like best one that you can get for eight cents towards the postage, by applying to the American office of the London and North Eastern Railway, 11 West 42nd Street, N. Y. It is "Enjoying England," by B. L. Warde, a guide to happiness not only in the South but almost anywhere on the island: it so happened that I was taken along on some of the many trips out of which it was constructed, and know how accurate it is. But it is no book for a homesick Briton to read away from home. Even a foreigner is likely to reach for a list of steamer sailings. Another lovely countryside book is Thomas Burke's "The English Inn" (Longmans), which I have so often tried out that I can believe it is all true. "The Green Fields of England," by Clare Cameron (Richard Smith), should be subsidized by travel bureaus and circulated among gentlefolk a trifle tired with rushing nowhere and willing to settle somewhere where life is rich with time and beauty. It is a true companion for the countryside, and so, though in a different way, is Henry Williamson's "The Village Book" (Dutton). Either would be good for frayed nerves.

The best book for London since "The London Perambulator" has just come from Morrow, "London at Home," by M. V. Hughes. It is the sort of discursive handbook only a Londoner born and bred could write, but its distinctive feature is that it is written by one who likes Americans and knows what they want to know outside of the guidebooks. My mother's trained nurse, who has been reading it aloud, says she is convinced that she has been spending the week in London. This reminds me to add that it makes excellent bedside reading.

Children's Bookshop

(*Continued from page 820*)

new gods. She does not carry us on into the Volsung Saga.

Simplicity and clarity of style in keeping with the tale of oral origin have long been recognized in Miss Pyle's work. It is this to our mind, which makes her Tales from Norse Mythology a book suitable for almost any age; for who is too young or too old to enjoy stories told as our ancestors might have told them to each other when no thought was given to age or grade limits, to I. Q. or Binet tests?

A far cry it seems from the thunderous gigantic realms of Asgard and Jotunheim to the delicate elfin world of Irish folk lore, yet here too in "There Was Magic in Those Days" we are dealing with giants. Giants they are by comparison only, for it is the fascinating old theme of Gulliver's Travel's fame that Mr. O'Conor has revived, basing his tale upon The King of The Leprecaun's Journey to Emania.

Children and grown-ups alike will love this new treatment of the ever-engaging theme of little people astray among giants, of a giant human a hostage among the little people. The glamorous description of fairyland and its entirely satisfactory representatives to the country of mortals is the story's chief charm. Here are the captivating manners and customs of the Leprechauns. We have read them before and they are still irresistible.

This is indeed one of the distinctive books of 1930. A title page that takes us at one glance into the heart of fairyland is indebted to J. Gower Parks for the magic of the delightful ornamentation. The illustrations, apart from their real sympathy with the story, are perfectly in keeping with the delicate yet clear type and with the general make-up of the book. Is it pure luck that Mr. O'Conor has fallen in with publishers who could make of his book something that seems as effortless as his style and as perfect as his story teller's touch?

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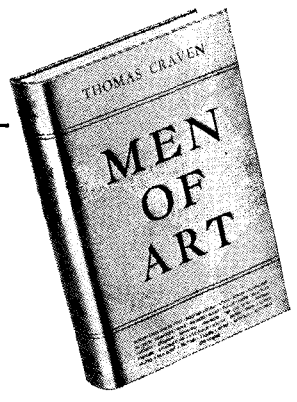

MEN OF ART

By THOMAS CRAVEN

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